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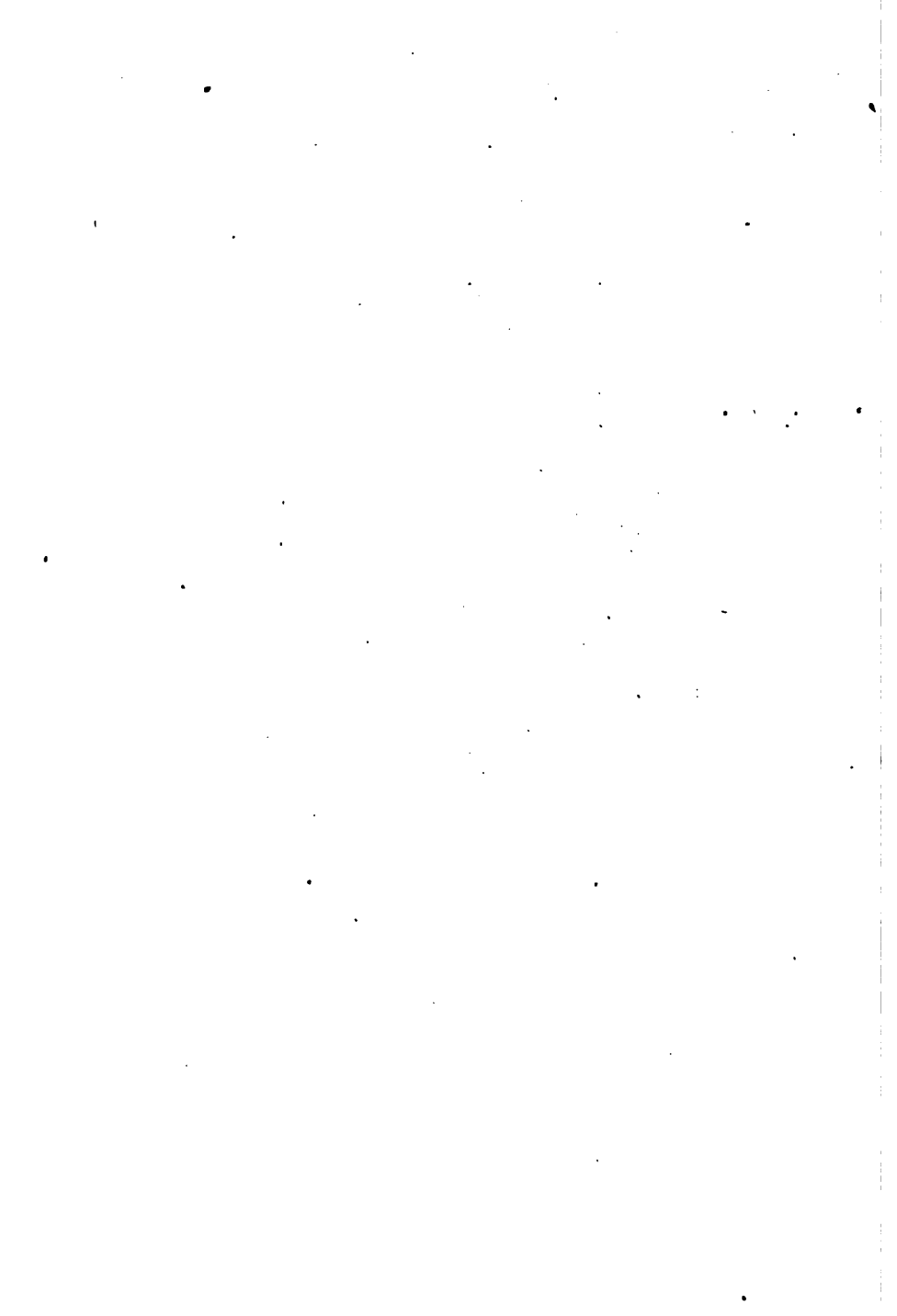
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1904
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TWENTIETH CENTURY TEXT-BOOKS

EDITED BY

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Washington Irving

TWENTIETH CENTURY TEXT-BOOKS

A BRIEF HISTORY OF
AMERICAN LITERATURE

BY

WILLIAM P. TRENT

PROFESSOR IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

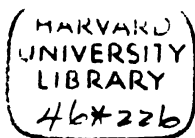
AUTHOR OF A HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE, 1607-1865
THE AUTHORITY OF CRITICISM, ETC., ETC.



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PREFACE

IN this book, which is designed for the use of schools, I have endeavoured to furnish a condensed account of the development of American literature, rather than a series of connected essays on leading American authors. At the same time I have tried to mention no writer or book devoid of a fair amount of significance, and I have also had it in mind to treat the more important authors on a scale sufficiently extended to suit the needs of the average class. I have aimed to minimize tentative criticism and to give only such details of historical setting as could not well be spared. I have condensed the bibliographical information to dimensions more or less proportionate with the resources of school libraries and have divided it into sections according to chapters. The period from 1866 to the present day has been sketched in a chapter, fuller treatment of writers, many of whom are still living, not seeming advisable in view of the difficulty of maintaining an impartial attitude toward contemporaries. An appendix gives important dates, which may be used in lieu of those scattered through the text. Topics for essays and class reports will be often suggested by the paragraph headings, and teachers may sometimes find it advantageous, when time permits, to have reports made on writers and books mentioned in the Appendix but not in the text, as well as on topics treated more fully in my larger book, "A History of American Literature, 1607-1865" (1903, Appleton).

Lists of questions have been dispensed with, because the main topic of each paragraph has been plainly indicated, because un-

essential biographical and bibliographical facts have been in the main eliminated, so far as I can judge, and because it seems preferable that teachers and pupils should ask their own questions and make their own comments upon the criticism. With regard to the opening pages of Chapter VI, which deal with the origins of the Transcendental movement and could not have been omitted without loss of continuity, or expanded to secure increased clearness without sacrifice of proportion, I must leave it to the individual teacher to determine what portion, if any, is suited to the wants of his pupils. It is needless to say, in conclusion, that every one who has taught literature, especially in schools, knows how difficult it is to prepare a suitable handbook of literary history, and that I shall be greatly indebted to those teachers who will call my attention to any errors they may discover.

W. P. TRENT.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, *October 1, 1904.*

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

EARLY COLONIAL WRITERS (1607-1700)

Meaning of the term "American literature." THE term "American literature" embodies that narrow use of the word "American" found in many similar phrases such as "American history"—the use that confines to the area covered by the United States the application of a word which, strictly speaking, applies to the whole of two large continents. As the United States form by far the most important nation in the western hemisphere and will probably long continue to do so, it is likely that this restricted use of the word "American" will prevail for a very extended period. We mean, then, by "American literature" the literature produced by native or adopted citizens of the United States, including under the latter term the thirteen colonies that revolted from Great Britain and formed those States.

What is literature? But this explanation involves another explanation. What do we mean by the word "literature"? Many able critics have endeavoured to define it, yet have scarcely been successful. It is generally agreed, however, that for the purposes of most students and readers a nation's literature does not mean all that has been written in a particular language

or division of it, but rather the significant, the important books, and especially those which through the presence of imagination excite our emotions more or less pleasurably. Thus, for example, many useful histories, both of individual States and of the nation, hardly belong to American literature, because they are not written in such a way as to attract readers, whereas Washington Irving's *Knickerbocker's History of New York* is so full of literary charm that it has given a large number of persons false ideas with regard to the history of the colony with which it deals in a humorous way.

What now can be said about the general character of the significant books that have been written within the bounds of the United States since the first permanent settlement was made at Jamestown in 1607? For a long time many unfavourable and ridiculously overfavourable things were said about them, but we are beginning to see that throughout our history there has been no real reason for shame or for boasting about our literary achievements. Few books of genuine consequence were written on our soil before the beginning of the nineteenth century; yet such as were written served the needs of the people who read them, and, as we shall soon see, there was scarcely a chance that our primitive forefathers should have left literary master-pieces for our admiration. After independence was secured and the nation entered upon its great career of territorial and industrial expansion, a fair number of important writers appeared and literary activity of all sorts was widespread. Time has shown us that much of the literary work produced during the first half of the nineteenth century was valuable only on account of its general

**General
character of
American
literature.**

educative effects upon the people at large; but after the lapse of half a century the work of Emerson, Hawthorne, Poe, and not a few others is fresh and attractive. In other words, the advance made by American writers between the presidencies of Jefferson and Lincoln was probably greater than could reasonably have been expected, and covered well the fields of poetry, fiction, oratory, and history.

That the period since the civil war has seen a decline in the fields of poetry and oratory, and great changes in

**The modern
period.**

those of fiction and history, while it has marked an advance mainly in criticism and specialized scholarship, is generally admitted; but the same thing may be said of English and other literatures during the period, and it is doubtful whether in any other nation the number of competent writers has so largely increased as in America. A hundred years ago, American writers scarcely counted in the eyes of the world; to-day they are holding their own with those of far older nations. And the literature they have produced in a century is exceptionally wholesome in tone, solidly founded on observation and study, fairly, and in the cases of Cooper, Hawthorne, Poe, and Whitman exceptionally, characterized by imaginative power. Above all, through its general level of thought, feeling, and expression, it is excellently adapted to the civic needs of a great democracy. It is not a peculiar literature differing markedly from every other; but although many foreign and some native critics have regretted this fact, it is not in the least regrettable or surprising, since the American people in language, laws, religion, manners, and many other particulars do not differ widely from their English and European ancestors. A peculiar, novel literature

that might have interested Europe would not have answered the needs of America.

The literature of the American colonies, like their political history, is best treated under certain well-marked

Divisions of colonial literature. geographical and chronological divisions. There were three important groups of colonies, the Southern, the New England, and

the Middle, the second of which alone produced important books in any considerable quantity before the Revolution. The Southern colonies, of which Virginia may be taken as the type, were sparsely-settled agricultural communities in which a slave-holding aristocracy of planters possessing many characteristics in common with the English Cavaliers was the dominant caste. The New England colonies, of which Massachusetts was the leader, contained more towns and were more compactly settled than the Southern colonies, subsisted not merely on agriculture, but also on fishing, commerce, trading, and manufacturing on a small scale, and were on the whole democratic save in one particular—to wit, their willing submission to the power of the clergy. In this and in their simple, hard, and pious ways of life they continued to bear the impress of the great English Puritan movement of which they were the outcome. Between the Southern and the New England groups, and marked by characteristics found in the one or the other, came the Middle colonies, of which Pennsylvania is the most important to the student of American literature.

The writings produced in these three groups of colonies may be further divided into two sections according as they date from the seventeenth or from the eighteenth century, a more worldly and artificial tone having shown itself in the literature

A further division.

of the later period, as was also the case in contemporary England. It is obvious that a thoroughly satisfactory comprehension of the literature of these groups and periods cannot be obtained without considerable knowledge of the modes of life and the political and other achievements of the people, and that this is true of later times as well. In other words, the study of American literature cannot be profitably divorced from the study of American history.

It is not surprising to find that throughout the colonial period the writers produced in the Southern colonies were few in number and comparatively unimportant. Literature may be the diversion of a country gentleman, but it is rarely his pursuit, and the Southern planters were fully occupied in looking after large estates and bodies of slaves, as well as in the chase and other rural pleasures. What they did write was in the main composed, not so much to please themselves, as to give information about the colonies to the mother country, where almost from the beginning there was much hostile criticism of the colonists and their ways. The earliest writings, with the exception of the translations from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* made at Jamestown by George Sandys, were almost entirely of this kind, and some of the most important were by Englishmen who did not become permanent settlers.

Chief among these was the famous Captain John Smith (1579-1632), the hero of many adventures, of which he gave a picturesque account that has not been accepted by some students as entirely credible. There is little doubt, however, that Smith's energy and good sense went far toward saving Jamestown in its perilous early years, and it is probable

**The early
Southern
writers.**

**Captain John
Smith.**

that Americans will always take interest in the little book he wrote upon Virginian soil and had published in London in 1608. This bore the long title, *A True Relation of*



Jo Smith.

Such Occurrences and Accidents of Note as hath Happened in Virginia, and was really little more than a pamphlet letter, but a very interesting one in its description of the state of the colony and of its author's adventures with the Indians. If Smith had mentioned in this book his romantic rescue by Pocahontas, upon which he enlarged in his later *General History of Virginia*, etc.

(1624), he would have escaped much unfavourable criticism from modern scholars; but whether or not he is misleading as a historian, he is quaintly attractive as a writer.

This can be said of but few of his successors, yet a certain Colonel Henry Norwood may be remembered as the author of an interesting *Voyage to Virginia* (1649), and two or three important and not unreadable tracts were written about the small rebellion in Virginia headed by the young planter Nathaniel Bacon (1676). The sister colony of Maryland also furnished at least one writer who can be read to-day with some pleasure. This was George Alsop, an indented servant, who in *A Character of the Province of Maryland* (1666), described in a humorous way the rough, homely life led by the settlers. The Carolinas were founded too late in the seventeenth century to produce

**Other
chroniclers.**

anything worth recording here. This is in the main true of Pennsylvania, also, with the exception of some writings of William Penn, who was from first to last an Englishman, and of a sprightly *Account* given of Pennsylvania and West New Jersey (1698) by Gabriel Thomas. As New York has nothing so good to offer, we may pass at once to New England, where certain forms of literature were cultivated with much assiduity and fair success.

The settlement and development of New England during the seventeenth century naturally furnished materials to a larger number of historical writers than was the case with the Southern and the Middle colonies. Several reasons may be given for this.

In addition to the desire to make the material resources of the region known to Englishmen, New Englanders had a special interest in communicating with their fellow Puritans, who might themselves need a place of refuge and would certainly be glad to learn something about the state of religion in the New World. Moreover there were several political groups as well as several ecclesiastical divisions to be described, while the number of competent writers was exceptionally large, because the settlers included a considerable number of well-educated ministers and laymen. The further fact that the population was homogeneous and comparatively centred in towns and villages, instead of being scattered over huge plantations, added to the quantity and effectiveness of



A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "Wm Penn". The ink is dark and the script is fluid, characteristic of the 17th or 18th century.

New England's contribution to the annals of colonial America. Thus we are not surprised to find that the Pilgrims had scarcely landed at Plymouth, (December 22, 1620), before their leaders began to write historical narratives, and that, as each New England colony was founded, the stock of such narratives increased apace.

The earliest of these annalists was William Bradford (1590-1657), one of the Separatists in Holland, who after the migration to the New World held the Governorship of Plymouth colony almost continuously until his death. He was a man of well-balanced, noble character, as his writings show, and a statesman and scholar of more than usual intelligence.



BRADFORD'S HOME AT PLYMOUTH.

His first book was a journal which he kept with another interesting Pilgrim, Edward Winslow. It was published in 1622 under the erroneous title

of *Mourt's Relation*, and gave a simple, attractive account of the founding of Plymouth. In 1630, the worthy Governor began an elaborate *History of Plymouth*, on which he laboured for twenty years. This is most important to historians, and in many passages it holds the attention of the general reader by its dignity and quaint eloquence. The book had a curious history, for after remaining in manuscript in Massachusetts until the Revolution, it found its way to the library of the Bishop of London at Fulham,

where it reposed unnoticed for many years. Then its existence was made known through a comparison of passages that had been copied into an early American and a later English book. It was printed in 1856, and in 1897, in its original form, it was generously placed in the custody of the Governor of Massachusetts.

Still more important than Bradford, although drier and generally less attractive as a writer, is his contemporary, John Winthrop (1588–1649), founder and for many years Governor of the neighbouring colony of Massachusetts Bay. Win-

**John
Winthrop.**

throp's chief work is a *History of New England*, written from time to time during his busy life. It is valuable for its matter and affords full proof of its author's fine qualities as a man and a philosophic statesman; but most readers will prefer to glance over the charming letters Winthrop addressed to his wife Margaret—letters which show that it is a



John Eliot

a mistake to suppose that the New England Puritans led an utterly hard and unlovely life.

That they were in many respects hard and narrow is shown, however, by most of the books written on the subject of the red men and the wars waged against them. Yet exception should be made of the writings of Daniel Gookin and John Eliot, the famous Apostle to the Indians, names that deserve remembrance as those of men who, with Roger Williams, stand out as philanthropists of a noble type.

**Other Puritan
annalists.**

Probably the most complete contrast to these men is the strenuous Puritan, Captain Edward Johnson, author of the curiously partisan history that bears the high-sounding title, *The Wonder-Working Providence of Sion's Saviour in New England* (1654). But even Johnson had his rugged virtues, and all the chroniclers displayed piety, good sense, and essential manliness. Both as men and as writers they represented thoroughly a people of pure English stock, trained upon the English Bible, and rapidly inuring themselves to the primitive life of colonists in a new world.

What has just been said of the chroniclers is quite as true of the most important class in New England social life, that of the ministers of the gospel. Indeed, the ministers were often chroniclers themselves, as in the cases of Increase Mather and William Hubbard, the latter of whom wrote a book on the Indian wars that was long read with interest. The government of the earlier New England colonies was practically a theocracy, like that of the ancient Jews, and in consequence the ministers wielded a despotic power unknown in other parts of America. They formed what Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes was fond of calling a Brahmin caste—a phrase which will not mislead us if we remember that they could not have held their sway over their sturdy fellow colonists if they had not been, as a rule, men of considerable learning, deep piety, and strong common sense—in other words, leaders through strength of character as well as through the reverence inspired by their sacred calling. To modern minds their theology seems absurdly narrow and, when it led them to persecute Baptists, Quakers, and people accused of witchcraft, shockingly cruel. But their bigotry and harsh-

**New England
divines.**

ness came to them as an inheritance shared with their European contemporaries. They were good and strong men according to their lights; nor will any one who has read of them in the pages of Hawthorne be disposed to deny that on the whole they were as righteous as they are certainly picturesque. They excite our imaginations to-day as we picture them in their tall pulpits preaching terrible sermons about the torments of hell to stern congregations seated patiently for hours in midwinter in bare, bleak churches.

One of the chief duties of the New England divines was to aid the cause of religion by printing their sermons and by publishing theological works that would call sinners to repentance and confute heretics. In performing this duty they produced a mass of writings which, having served their purpose, and being only on rare occasions characterized by literary qualities, are justly left in oblivion. Some of the writers of these sermons and treatises were, however, such able men that their names should be remembered with great respect. Pre-eminent among these were Thomas Hooker, the chief founder of Connecticut, a commanding personality; Thomas Shepard, a milder type of clergyman who, nevertheless, exerted great influence in Boston; and John Cotton, who in the same town wielded an almost unrivalled authority as a preacher, a scholar, and a controversialist. Yet nothing that these men or any of their fellows have left us is fairly readable to-day, except perhaps a whimsical little book by the Rev. Nathaniel Ward, entitled *The Simple Cobbler of Agawam* (1646-47)—a diatribe on women's fashions, religious toleration, and other objects of its author's dislike. Its savage tone is somewhat mitigated by the presence of

The divines
as writers.

a fantastic style and a genuine though extravagant humour.

Three other New England divines require special notice, however, even if none of them has left a book that can be so easily read through as *The Simple*
Roger *Cobbler*. These are Roger Williams (1607–
Williams. 84), Increase Mather (1639–1723), and Cotton Mather (1663–1728). The first was born in London of humble parentage, came to Boston in 1631, soon got into



ROGER WILLIAMS MONUMENT,
PROVIDENCE, R. I.

trouble with his fellow ministers on account of what they regarded as his theological and political heresies, and was in a few years expelled from Massachusetts in a cruel way. In 1636, he founded Providence Plantation, and largely through his labours the colony of Rhode Island came into existence. But it is not as the founder of a State, it is rather as an advocate of religious toler-

ation that Roger Williams takes his place among great men. The new colony was liberal to all forms of religious belief, and in various ponderous books Williams argued for toleration against the formidable John Cotton. *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution* and *The Bloody Tenent Made Yet More Bloody by Mr. Cotton's Endeavour to Wash it White* are not titles that allure the modern reader, yet the

books contain many passages of sonorous, old-fashioned eloquence. Williams is also worth remembering gratefully on account of his philanthropic attitude toward the Indians; and no reader of the many noble letters he wrote to his friends and constituents will be inclined to deny that he is one of the most attractive and important figures in our colonial history.

Unfortunately, the Mathers, while important, are not attractive. They were reactionaries who held too firmly

Increase
Mather.

to the past; Williams
was progressive and
looked forward to the

future. The first representative of what was probably the most remarkable family in colonial America was the Rev. Richard Mather, who helped to compile *The Bay Psalm Book* (see page 17, note), and, when he died, left four clerical sons distinguished both in Great Britain



Increase Mather

and in New England. Of these the most eminent was Increase Mather, who was renowned as a preacher, a scholar, a most voluminous writer, an educator, and a statesman. The number of his publications amounts to nearly one hundred and forty, but of these the reader of to-day will probably enjoy only one—*An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences* (1684), a quaint book describing numerous wonderful events to which most men of Mather's day gave implicit credence. The great clergyman's life, however, as described in his son Cotton's biography bearing the curious title of *Parentator* (1724), is more interesting than any of his own writings. As a leader of the re-

actionaries bent upon retaining the power which the clerical caste was slowly losing, and as a president of Harvard College whose administration was hampered by intrigues, his personality is a distinct and picturesque one. As an agent charged with securing a charter for Massachusetts from King William III, after the vexations undergone by the colony during the reign of James II, he showed himself to be something more than an interesting personality, for he displayed many of the qualities of a successful statesman. But his reputation, great as it was, seems even during his lifetime to have been eclipsed by that of his son.

The younger Mather (who was named after his grandfather, the famous John Cotton)

**Cotton
Mather.**

was a prodigy from his childhood. As a

student in Harvard he was noted for immense learning, and until the day of his death he continued

to acquire knowledge in a way seldom paralleled. His acquisitions in the dead languages, in history, and in theology would now be considered singularly useless and pedantic; but he was a very great scholar of the type then prevalent and he gave proof of his learning in an appallingly large mass of writings. About four hundred titles are credited to him, and some of his manuscripts are still unpublished. Yet study and writing did not fully occupy his time. He was a busy pastor, he meddled largely in ecclesiastical and political matters, and he spent many an hour in praying and fasting and seeing visions. Unfortunately, it is the visionary side of his character that the world



Cotton Mather

chiefly remembers. He took a very indiscreet part in the trials of the men and women accused of witchcraft at Salem (1692), and he wrote in defence of the horrible persecution to which the poor wretches were subjected. As the most prominent man connected with these outrages, he has been selected by posterity to bear the odium of deeds for which the superstitious character of the age was chiefly responsible. In reality, he was by no means the worst offender against justice and humanity in the sad business, nor is it fair to forget his services in the cause of temperance and other social reforms. With all his limitations he was a great man who should be remembered with gratitude to-day, if only for one remarkable book, over which he spent many years of labour.

This is his *Magnalia Christi Americana; or the Ecclesiastical History of New England, from Its First Planting in the Year 1620, unto the Year of Our Lord,*

**The
Magnalia.**

1698. The purpose of this huge folio, published in 1702,¹ is indicated in the title, which also gives a faint idea of the quaintness of the volume. It is full of inaccuracies and one can scarcely manage to read many pages at a time; but it is well worth dipping into for accounts of various old divines and magistrates and of events that shaped the development of New England. Take him on the whole, Cotton Mather, whether we track him through his ponderous *Magnalia*, or his truly filial *Parentator*, or his useful *Essays to Do Good*, appears to have been a pious and remarkably able man who would have done greater things had he not lived in a transition period.

The *Magnalia* and many of the other books that

¹ In London, where many of the early American books were printed.

have been mentioned contain considerable quantities of what once passed for poetry. The Puritan was not over friendly to art of any kind, believing that men had something better to do than to paint pictures, especially of saints, no better, as he thought, than they should have been, or to write poems full of carnal love and vain imagination. He was not unwilling, however, to use the art of verse in order to commemorate the virtues of godly men; hence elegiac and panegyrical poetry fairly flourished in colonial New England, much of it coming from the pens of the divines themselves and being to-day unreadable except for its odd qualities. In the South men had no such prejudice against poetry, but neither there nor in the Middle colonies did they have much time or inclination to write it. All, therefore, save special students and readers in search of the curious may pass over the entire mass of colonial verse without loss, nor need even such students and readers concern themselves with many poems or poets.

Perhaps the only single poem of fairly sustained quality produced in the early colonies is a short elegy on Bacon, the Virginian rebel, which is preserved in one of the tracts describing the revolt and is supposed to have been written by his body-servant. The best of the New England elegies is a longer one written in 1677 upon the Rev. Thomas Shepard—not the famous divine of that name—by the Rev. Urian Oakes, President of Harvard and a preacher and scholar of repute. This poem is characterized by the fantastic style common in England fifty years before, yet it is not without stanzas marked by pathos and force.

Two fairly prolific writers of verse deserve also to be

remembered. The first is Mrs. Anne Bradstreet (1612–72), daughter of one governor of Massachusetts, Thomas Dudley, and wife of another, Simon Bradstreet. She was a good, true woman, well read in the poets of her day, and possessed of genuine though very slight literary powers both in prose and in verse. Her poems seemed all the more remarkable to her friends because women seldom endeavoured then to rival men in literature. In 1650, her brother-in-law, the Rev. John Woodbridge, while in England, had her verses printed without her knowledge. The opening words of the title were *The Tenth Muse, lately Sprung up in America*, and modest Mrs. Bradstreet has been called “The Tenth Muse” ever since. As we read her short tributes to her husband and to more distinguished personages like Queen Elizabeth, as well as her pretentious historical poems, we are forced to confess that the Nine Muses could well have dispensed with this addition to their company. Yet at least she had a better ear for harmony than the three divines who ten years before had given the world *The Bay Psalm Book*, probably as preposterously bad a collection of jingles as the world has ever known.¹ And she improved in her art, for a later poem, entitled “Contemplations,” shows that she had not only learned to write more harmonious lines, but had also grown more susceptible to the charms of nature.

¹ This famous volume was the first real book printed in America. It was compiled by Richard Mather, Thomas Welde, and John Eliot, and printed by Stephen Daye in 1640 at Cambridge in Massachusetts (*Bay*). One stanza will give the quality of the verse.

The Lord's song sing can wee ? being
in stranger's land, then let
loose her skill my right hand, if I
Jerusalem forget.

Mrs. Bradstreet is not, however, the typical poet of colonial New England since she reflected too strongly the influence of her English masters. This position with whatever honours attach to it, must be accorded not to her nor to our first native-born bard, Benjamin Thomson, but to an amiable clergyman born in England although educated in Massachusetts, the Rev. Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705). Wigglesworth, who was a mild-mannered invalid, is singularly enough remembered for a poem fuller of the theological terrors of the time than any other New England production in verse. This is *The Day of Doom; or A Poetical Description of the Great and Last Judgment*, which was published in 1662, went through numerous editions, and was even read in the nineteenth century. It eclipsed its author's other poems in popularity and is still cited, though for purposes of laughter at which Wigglesworth and his contemporaries would have been shocked. It consists of over two hundred stanzas marked only here and there by poetical qualities; but it did not need these, so great was the horrible fascination exerted by its gruesome subject. The climax of horror, or if one will, of absurdity, was reached in a speech addressed by the Almighty to the "Reprobate Infants," which concluded with the statement that, as they had sinned much less than those who had lived longer, they would be allowed "the easiest room in Hell."

It would not be fair to take leave of the early American writers with such a grim quotation. They believed and did many things that are abhorrent to us to-day; but they endeavoured to do their duty as they saw it, they laboured to make the wilderness more inhabitable, and they left important and sometimes in-

**Michael
Wiggles-
worth.**

Conclusion.

teresting records of their thoughts and deeds. There were no great literary geniuses among them, yet these are rare in any age, and most rare in new countries and pioneer periods. Gratitude rather than contempt is due our early authors for what they have left us, since at the very least we may discover in their writings an earnest desire to promote in every way the prosperity of their contemporaries and descendants. We may discover also proofs that the spirit of man cannot remain constant to any set of ideals—that growth toward the light is as natural in men and nations as in plants. Before the seventeenth century was over, new phases of literary activity began to announce the coming of a new age.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR CHAPTER I

A. General Works.—There are a number of books that treat in more or less detail the history of American literature as a whole. Several of these should be placed, if possible, in the school library in order that the teacher may assign such supplementary reading in them as may seem desirable. Such are the histories by John Nichol (Edinburgh, 1882), Charles F. Richardson (2 vols., 1887, Putnam), Katharine Lee Bates (1898, Macmillan), Barrett Wendell (1900, Scribner), Lorenzo Sears (1902, Little, Brown & Co.), W. P. Trent (1903, Appleton), George E. Woodberry, *Literature in America* (1903, Harper). This list will not be repeated, but reference to it will be made at the end of each chapter. The teacher will supply such page references as seem pertinent.

B. Anthologies.—There are two large general collections containing specimens of the writings of American authors, both of which are very useful. They are Duyckinck's *Cyclopædia of American Literature* (2 vols., 1855; enlarged, 1875) and the Stedman-Hutchinson *Library of American Literature* (11 vols., 1888-90). These will illustrate practically every author mentioned in this book.

C. **Special Works.**—Of the large number of books dealing with special sections or topics of American literature only a few need be cited here. The chief authority for the literature of the colonial and Revolutionary periods is the late Prof. Moses Coit Tyler, whose *History of American Literature during the Colonial Time* (2 vols., 1878, Putnam) and *The Literary History of the American Revolution* (2 vols., 1897, Putnam) should be constantly consulted. The development of American poetry is discussed in E. C. Stedman's *Poets of America* (1885, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) and J. L. Onderdonk's *History of American Verse* (1901, A. C. McClurg & Co.). For other works see the bibliography given in Wendell or in Trent.

D. **Special Anthologies.**—Of the older collections of American poetry, R. W. Griswold's *Poets and Poetry of America* (1842, and various later editions) is the most important; of the later, E. C. Stedman's elaborate *American Anthology* (1900, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.), a book which should certainly be secured. An excellent modern collection of prose specimens is G. R. Carpenter's *American Prose* (1898, Macmillan). For colonial literature the three small volumes edited by W. P. Trent and B. W. Wells entitled *Colonial Prose and Poetry* (1901, Crowell) may be found useful. Useful also is A. B. Hart's *American History told by Contemporaries* (4 vols., 1897-1901, Macmillan). The reprints of important documents and other materials for study given in the *Old South Leaflets* and the selections from leading American authors published in *The Riverside Literature Series* (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) are too well known to require praise.

E. **Helps for Further Study.**—Sufficient selections from the writings of Captain Smith, Governor Bradford, Governor Winthrop and other authors mentioned in the preceding chapter will be found in the *Stedman-Hutchinson Library*, the *Old South Leaflets*, and in Trent and Wells, *Colonial Prose and Poetry*. Further study of the verse of the period is rendered difficult by the fact that it is either scattered through old books like Mather's *Magnalia* or reprinted in private issues hard to obtain, such as the publications of the Club of Odd Volumes. There are two modern editions of Mrs. Bradstreet (1867 and 1897, private) and one of Wigglesworth's *Day of Doom* (1867). Captain Smith's works were edited by Arber in 1884; Bradford's

History of Plymouth was reprinted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1898; Winthrop's *History of New England* was published in 2 vols. in 1853; Roger Williams's writings are to be found in 6 vols. of the *Narragansett Club Publications*; Mather's *Magnalia* was reprinted in 1820 and in 1853. The *Library of Old Authors* contains Increase Mather's *Remarkable Providences*, as his famous *Essay* is usually called (1856), and Cotton Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1862). An edition of Ward's *Simple Cobbler* was published in 1843 and a reprint of *The Bay Psalm Book* in 1903.

Special mention should be made of three books which deal with great characters of the period, Williston Walker's *Ten New England Leaders* (1901), Oscar S. Straus's biography of Roger Williams (1894), and Prof. Barrett Wendell's *Cotton Mather, the Puritan Priest* (1891).

CHAPTER II

LATER COLONIAL WRITERS (1701-64)

THE American colonies underwent marked changes during the first half of the eighteenth century. With

Character of
the period.

the settlement of Georgia in 1733, the period of planting colonies was practically over.

The English had secured a firm hold upon a long strip of the Atlantic Coast, and hardy pioneers were pushing the outposts of civilization back to the mountains. Trade, commerce, and agriculture were steadily developing, and a few towns afforded some of the advantages of urban life. One menace remained, the combined power of the French and the Indians; but fortunately before their attack was made, the colonies had grown strong enough to resist it successfully with the aid of the mother-country. All these advantages, however, carried with them their attendant drawbacks. The heroic qualities demanded of the founders were not so much needed by their prosperous successors. New England declined from her high spiritual level as her men of business and affairs amassed comfortable fortunes. With the lessening of external perils came an increase of the spirit of dissension. There were ecclesiastical quarrels; colonies squabbled with one another about boundaries and with their governors about salaries; questions relating to charters and to financial legislation induced much wrangling.

Such a period was naturally unfavourable to the production of literature; in fact, although there was an improvement in general qualities of style due chiefly to a similar improvement shown previously by British writers, there were even fewer strong and interesting personalities among American authors of the early eighteenth century than there had been among the annalists and divines of the seventeenth. The poetry of the one period was about as bad as that of the other; the models followed, however, were very different. The extravagance of the fantastic school gave place to the precision and regularity of Dryden and Pope, the change being propitious to mediocrity and dulness. Still, it was probably well that in both verse and prose the colonial writers should have drawn nearer to contemporary British models instead of farther away, for they needed training, and the formal, urban literature of Queen Anne's reign could be imitated with fair success. Even Franklin, one of the most original of men, would probably have accomplished less as a writer if he had not written Addisonian essays in his youth. And when all deductions are made, it must be admitted that the colonies during this period produced two very able writers, Edwards and Franklin, several interesting and two scholarly historians, and three diarists, who, although they do not deserve the fame of Pepys, are nevertheless worth reading.

Of the small poets who were fairly numerous in New England and Pennsylvania during the later colonial period, but few deserve to have their achievements chronicled. Governor Roger Wolcott, of Connecticut, wrote a short epic upon the founding of that commonwealth, which was, if anything,

Writings and
writers of
the period.

Writers of
verse.

worse than the crude ballads sung by the people in celebration of victories over their French and Indian foes. The Rev. Benjamin Colman wrote verses in the style of Pope, and his daughter, Mrs. Jane Turell, left a number of mild poems which were piously collected by her husband in a little volume that is now very rare. The Rev. Mr. Turell's biography of his father-in-law, Dr. Colman, is a much more interesting book than his edition of his wife's poems. A somewhat similar statement may be made with regard to a famous citizen of Boston whom his townspeople looked upon as a very great poet—the Rev. Mather Byles (1707–88). This worthy man, who showed true courage at the end of his long life when he boldly opposed the leaders of the Revolution, was widely known for his puns and his verses, and his admirers thought that he really rivalled Pope instead of imitating him poorly. Byles's poetry is almost unreadable to-day, but the man is a picturesque personality. This is the case with his facetious contemporary, Joseph Green, who wrote many parodies and squibs in verse. Both men serve to show how much Boston had changed since the days of Cotton and Shepard, when life furnished few occasions for merriment. This change is to be discovered throughout New England; it is seen in almanacs, in long verse narratives celebrating military exploits, in artificial poems that follow English models and illustrate the colonial desire to conform with the tastes and fashions of the mother-country. The later poets were less uncouth than their predecessors, but they were also less independent.

The outlook for American poetry was slightly brighter in Pennsylvania than in New England. After Benjamin Franklin had left Boston for Philadelphia, he drew

around him in the latter town a small band of writers who, although they wrote nothing significant, at least stimulated literary production. Toward the

Two young poets.

end of the colonial period two young poets, both born in Philadelphia and both cut off in early manhood, showed by their imitations of Gray and of earlier English poets that a change of poetic taste was at hand. These were the friends Thomas Godfrey (1736-63) and Nathaniel Evans (1742-67), who need not be compared with Keats, for they showed no such brilliant promise as he did, but who deserve to be remembered for genuine, if slight, poetic talents and for sincere work that gave promise of better. It is worth while to mention the fact that Godfrey's *Prince of Parthia* (1765) was the first important effort made in America to write a poetical tragedy.



Sam Sewall

More interesting than the poets are the prose writers, especially those diarists who give us clear pictures of the life led by the colonists. The first of these

Judge Sewall.

was Judge Samuel Sewall (1652-1730), of Boston, a typical Puritan, who nevertheless showed some modern traits. He was concerned in the witchcraft trials, but publicly acknowledged his contrition for the share he took in that persecution. He wrote what seems to be the first American antislavery document—a short tract entitled *The Selling of Joseph* (1700). He is best known, however, for his *Diary*, which

remained in manuscript until the last century. This covers most of his life, is very voluminous and in places dull, and gives invaluable materials for constructing a picture of primitive New England. Its most amusing pages are those that deal with the shrewd old judge and his curious courtships.

Less valuable, but not less sprightly, is another New England diary not published until the nineteenth century

Mrs. Knight and Colonel Byrd —a *Journal* of a journey undertaken on horseback in 1704 from Boston to New York

by Mrs. Sarah Kemble Knight, an enterprising, wide-awake woman who kept a school in the former town. This gives a vivid description of the discomforts



THE BYRD MANSION, WESTOVER, VIRGINIA.

of colonial travelling and of the rude life led by the country people. The third and most important of these diaries or journals, from the point of view

of literary merit, was written by one of the most cultivated of colonial Americans, the Virginian, Colonel William Byrd (1674-1744). This gentleman was well educated in England, travelled in Europe, inherited a large estate in Virginia, and filled high public positions in his native colony. He collected a large library and profited in his style from the books he read. His writings remained in manuscript until 1841, and his correspondence has only just been published; yet he might, had he so chosen, have

made a name for himself as a writer during his lifetime, for whatever he wrote was eminently characterized by humour and ease. His chief work is a *History of the Dividing Line Run in the Year 1728*. This is an account of his experiences as a commissioner for drawing the boundary between Virginia and North Carolina. It describes the wilderness and its scarcely civilized inhabitants in a fashion as entertaining as it is instructive.

When the colonies entered upon the second century of their existence and upon a period of comparatively peace-

ful development, it
Historians.

was natural that attention should be paid to local history, and that the historical narratives produced should be more scholarly and impartial than the annals of the preceding century. Two such scholarly historians deserve special remembrance. One is the Rev.

William Stith (1689-1755), a

Virginian clergyman, and President of the College of William and Mary at Williamsburg, who wrote a painstaking and dignified *History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia* (1747). The other is the Rev. Thomas Prince (1687-1758), of Massachusetts, a thorough and laborious scholar, author of an accurate and valuable *Chronological History of New England* (1736). Neither progressed far in his narrative, and both found reason to complain of the lack of interest shown by their contemporaries in such labours of patriotic scholarship. Then, as now, the public wished to be interested, and readers doubtless found more to interest them in Robert Bever-



↑ Prince

ley's *History and Present State of Virginia* (1705), a lively book easily read to-day, or in the two whimsical volumes of an historical *Summary* (1748-53) published in Boston by a learned physician, William Douglass. There were other historical writers, some of them meritorious, but their works can scarcely be said to have literary value.

The numerous divines of the period contributed no more to literature than the historians, although they wrote very voluminously. Perhaps, they were less

Divines.

important as a class and on the whole less striking as individuals than their seventeenth-century predecessors, yet they numbered among themselves not a few remarkably able men.



Jonathan Edwards

For example, John Wise, of Ipswich, Massachusetts, who was prominent in the ecclesiastical controversies of the first quarter of the eighteenth century, defended the cause of civil and religious liberty with an eloquence and a learning rare in any period.

By far the greatest of colonial clergymen, however, and one of the great theologians and metaphysicians of

the world was Jonathan Edwards, who was born at East Windsor, Connecticut, October 5, 1703. After a precocious boyhood he entered Yale College in

Jonathan Edwards.

1716 where, in view of his youth and his opportunities for instruction, he attained a really extraordinary acquaintance with philosophy and natural science. After graduation he studied theology, did some

preaching and tutoring, and finally settled at Northampton, Massachusetts, as the colleague of his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard. Then he married a beautiful and spiritual woman, Sarah Pierrepont, of New Haven, who fully deserved the eloquent words in which he described her virtues. She was "beloved of that Great Being who made and rules the world," who came to her and filled "her mind with exceeding sweet delight," with whom she expected to dwell "and to be ravished with his love and delight forever."

For many years Edwards led the life of a country pastor, throwing himself heart and soul into the Great Awakening, as the religious revival of the time is

**Edwards at
Northampton.**

called, and preaching powerful sermons, the fame of which spread throughout New England. Unfortunately, it is for one of these sermons, entitled "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," preached at Enfield, Massachusetts, in 1741, that Edwards is popularly remembered. He drew a terrible picture of the torments of the damned and hence is generally regarded as the chief exponent of extreme Calvinistic theology, the gentler and more beautiful side of his character, which appears in many of his writings, being left out of account. His parishioners did him a similar injustice



NASSAU HALL, PRINCETON.

when they pushed a dissension in the church to the point of forcing him to resign his charge at Northampton in 1750. After this he served as an Indian missionary, wrote some of his most important books, including his greatest metaphysical work, *On the Freedom of the Will* (1754), and was elected president of the new college at Princeton, where he died shortly afterward, March 22, 1758.

Although many passages of eloquent and even of charming prose may be selected from his writings, Edwards

Edwards as a
writer.

was not a man of letters, and his works belong scarcely, if at all, to literature. He was a great preacher and a still greater theologian, who carried the Calvinistic theology to the highest point of development. He was a psychological observer, and a metaphysician and logician whose powers of reasoning were of the first order. The conclusions of his greatest book, limiting the freedom of volition, and its attacks upon the upholders of what is known as the Arminian theology are of slight influence to-day; but no competent person has ever denied that in this treatise Edwards showed himself to be a most cogent reasoner. His fame as a thinker spread rapidly just before and after his death, and numerous disciples arose to expound his teachings. He is still carefully studied by theologians, who, as a rule, extract from his writings arguments to support systems of thought more or less antagonistic to his general views; but this is only a crowning proof of his intellectual honesty, and of the range and stimulative quality of his genius. Only specialists can master his thought, but every one can reverence his noble life and admire his lofty soul and powerful intellect.

Of all colonial Americans Benjamin Franklin is the best known to his latter-day countrymen and to the world at

large. His career lasted, indeed, throughout the Revolutionary period, but he had shown the variety and quality of his powers and secured fame

**Franklin's
youth.**

while the colonies were still loyal to the British crown. Hence he may be legitimately considered as representing with Jonathan Edwards the highest development of the colonial mind,

the one in the sphere of practical, the other in that of spiritual, affairs. Franklin was born in Boston, January 17, 1706, the son of a tallow-chandler of large family and small means. After but little schooling the boy was apprenticed to his elder brother, a printer. He read much in the leading prose writers of the time, especially Addison, and wrote imitative essays which he published anonymously



Benjamin Franklin

in his brother's newspaper, *The New England Courant*.¹ His situation becoming intolerable to him, he ran away in the fall of 1723 and tried to become a printer in New York. Not finding employment there,

¹ Newspapers were small things in those days and comparatively new. *Public Occurrences*, issued in Boston in 1690, was the first in America, but that was suppressed after one number, for criticism of public affairs seemed dangerous to the ruling classes. Fourteen years later came *The Boston News-Letter*, which for fifteen years was without a rival. In less than fifty years, however, there were over forty newspapers in the country. Practically the first American magazine was established by Franklin at Philadelphia in 1741. Its cumbrous title was *The General Magazine and Historical Chronicle for all the British Plantations in America*.

he pushed on to Philadelphia, entering that town in an unconventional manner amusingly described in his *Autobiography*.

Philadelphia was a cosmopolitan place, containing several men of scholarly attainments; but it was not long before the young printer eclipsed them all and became the first citizen of his adopted town. He was patronized by the Governor and encouraged to go to England to buy a press and type. Deceived by promises of support in this matter, he ex-

tricated himself from his predicament by his common sense and prudence. Then, on his return to Philadelphia, he was rewarded with a prosperous business as printer and editor that enabled him to marry in 1730. He continued his studies, formed a debating club and gathered literary and scientific men around him, and took great interest in municipal affairs.

He showed his literary ability

by beginning in 1733 to publish under the pen-name of "Richard Saunders" an almanac full of useful and of homely wisdom which made the characters of "Poor Richard" and "Father Abraham" famous throughout America. He founded the Philadelphia Library and projected what became the University of Pennsylvania. He invented the "Franklin stove," and by his famous experiments with a kite showed that lightning is a form of electricity, thus winning world-wide fame as a scientist.



FRANKLIN'S BIRTHPLACE,
BOSTON.

As postmaster of Philadelphia and afterward as deputy postmaster-general for the colonies he did much to improve the postal service.

In the Albany Conference of 1754 Franklin proposed a plan of union for all the colonies. Three years later he was sent to England as agent for Pennsylvania to secure the settlement of vexatious questions relating to the rights of the proprietors in the colony. He remained five years and was so successful that in 1764 he was sent back again to try to prevent the passage of the Stamp Act. Other colonies made him their agent and he was kept abroad over ten years, during which he widened his reputation and made wise and brave, but fruitless, efforts to prevent the ministerial and legislative acts that had so much to do with bringing on the Revolution. On his return to America he supported the war party and signed the Declaration of Independence. Late in 1776 he was sent to France to secure aid and was received with an enthusiasm that has scarcely ever been paralleled. He remained until 1785, winning great triumphs both as a diplomatist and as a man of science and letters. Then he was chosen chief executive of the State of Pennsylvania, served in the Constitutional Convention of 1787, and died on February 12, 1790, after the general government had been working for nearly a year under the new Constitution. His had been a wonderful career, more varied than that of any other American of his day, and perhaps more typical of the common-sense, prosaic eighteenth century than that of any European. His chief defect, a lack of spirituality and of sensibility to the poetic elements of life, accounts for certain blemishes to be observed both in his conduct and in his writings and was in part due to

**Franklin as a
statesman.**

the century in which he lived. His chief strength, his eminent practicality and sense for reality, was also in part due to the times and to some extent to the country in which he lived; but in all he was and did, especially in his sallies of humour, his individual genius was paramount.

Although Franklin's works fill a large number of volumes, he should not be regarded as an author in the strict

Franklin's writings. sense of that word. Writing was not the chief purpose of his life; he was not a professional man of letters. He compiled alman-

acs, wrote political pamphlets, composed scientific monographs, sent out hundreds of letters, invented humorous and satirical trifles, mainly because such things helped him to attain success in business and diplomacy. Even his most important literary effort, his unfinished *Autobiography*, was conceived and executed rather as a work of usefulness than as a work of art. But Franklin was a genius and in whatever he wrote revealed himself. Hence nearly all his writings are interesting, and he is remembered as a writer, while many a contemporary author who laboured far more on his works is forgotten. It is curious also to notice that, although Franklin's Americanism can be recognised in everything he did and wrote, he is one of the few Americans that have written cosmopolitan classics. This is because he was more than a typical American, more than an important figure in science and in diplomacy—he was an interesting man. He was a good but not a great humorist, he possessed a good but not a great style, he was eminent but not supreme as scientist, statesman, and citizen; but if he had not been in addition a fascinating personality it is probable that he would be far less known to-day. As it is, his letters repay reading,

his *Autobiography* is a delightful classic, his *Examination* before the House of Commons and his Preface to Poor Richard's Almanac seem destined never to be forgotten.

When Franklin went to England in 1764 to represent colonial interests, he left behind him a people who had made a decided advance in the power of self-expression as compared with their ancestors whom Increase Mather had represented in a somewhat similar way about seventy-five years before. Only two writers of eminence, Edwards and Franklin, had been produced, and neither of these was a man of letters. But many men and a few women had learned to write prose less cumbersome than that written by their fathers; poetry showed a slight improvement; a small number of creditable books had appeared; and in political and theological discussions the intelligence of the people had been so sharpened that a keen observer might have foretold that in the controversies soon to arise with the mother-country the colonists in their pamphlets and speeches and public documents would give a good account of themselves. Indeed this might have been inferred from the career of a single colonist—the man who sums up most of the best characteristics of his contemporaries—Benjamin Franklin.

**Literary
progress.**

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR CHAPTER II

A. General Works.—For General and Special Works and Anthologies, see the Bibliography at the end of Chapter I.

B. Helps for Further Study.—The poetry of the later colonial period is sufficiently represented in Trent and Wells, *Colonial Prose and Poetry*, vol. iii. The verse of a few writers, e. g., Wolcott, has been reprinted, but in the main the poetry must be studied in the original editions. The chief prose works

have been reprinted. Prince's *Chronological History* is in Arber's *English Garner*, vol. ii; Sewall's Diary, in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, Fifth Series, vols. v-viii; the best edition of Colonel Byrd's writings is that by Prof. J. S. Bassett (1901). Mrs. Knight's *Journal* was first edited in 1825 and there have been reprints of it, as well as of the histories of Beverley and Stith. Of the five incomplete editions of Edwards's works the latest is that of 1852 (4 vols.). Some of his sermons have just been edited by H. N. Gardiner (1904). The best biography of Edwards is that by Rev. A. V. G. Allen (1889). See also the essay on Edwards by O. W. Holmes (*Works*, vol. viii). The best edition of Franklin's works is that by John Bigelow (10 vols., 1887-88), who is also the editor of the best edition of the *Autobiography* (3 vols., 1875). Franklin's career as a writer is described in a volume of the *American Men of Letters* series by Prof. John Bach McMaster. There are numerous biographies treating other phases of his life.

CHAPTER III

WRITERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD (1765-88)

THE period stretching from the passage of the Stamp Act to the adoption of the Constitution has long been regarded as of prime importance both by Americans interested in their own history and by foreigners interested in the spread of popular government throughout the world. During this period statesmen made contributions to political thought which are not surpassed in importance by anything since achieved by American writers and thinkers. The literature of the Revolution, of course, grew out of the needs of the time and was coloured by its hopes and passions, nor can it be thoroughly understood without a considerable knowledge of contemporary men and events. Such knowledge is more easily obtained now than formerly, since the writings of the chief statesmen have been collected, their lives carefully studied, and their measures scrutinized with approximate impartiality. It is no longer customary to heap unrelieved censure upon the British and unstinted praise upon those Americans who threw in their fortunes with the Revolutionary cause. The short-sightedness and stubbornness of George III and some of his ministers may still be emphasized, but the often specious character of some of the American legal and political reasoning is also recognised. We now see that the removal of the dread of conquest by France, the

growth of colonial wealth and population, the constant friction between the native authorities and the king's representatives, the growth of political ambition among the colonists, had much to do with bringing on the Revolution. We see furthermore that the American Loyalists who, in spite of the Stamp Act, the Acts of Trade, and the bloodshed at Lexington, sided passionately with the king and the mother-country, had better reasons to give for their conduct than the patriotic Whigs of those exciting days were willing to allow. Misconceptions were rife on both sides of the Atlantic, but those of the English and American Tories who clung to the old order of things were the more costly. The Revolution once begun could not be checked, and it is well to believe that the world is the better for it.

One of the earliest speakers and writers who by his manner of handling public questions incited his country-

men to resistance to
The first British measures was
publicists.

the learned Boston lawyer, James Otis. In 1761, he argued forcibly against the issuance of general search-warrants, or "writ of assistance." He afterward published pamphlets on the Stamp Act, took part in the Stamp Act Congress, and would probably have been an important leader in the Revolution, like the Virginian orator, Patrick Henry, had he not partly lost his mind through hurts received in an encounter with a customs official. Another citizen of Massachusetts, who like Otis stimulated his fellow citizens to



James Otis

demand their liberties, but did not live to see the full results of his labours, was the Rev. Jonathan Mayhew, one of the most liberal and able clergymen of his day. Equal patriotism was displayed by another clergyman, who was not, like Mayhew, a native. This was the famous John Witherspoon, a Scotch theologian who became President of Princeton in 1768 and a few years later took an active part in Revolutionary politics. He is still remembered as a Signer of the Declaration; he should also be remembered as a vigorous and prolific writer who did much to educate the citizens of his adopted country. These are but a few of the many lawyers and clergymen who by speeches, sermons, and pamphlets nerved the people of the colonies to resist tyranny, or what was believed to be tyranny, on the part of the king and his ministers. No one but the special student reads their productions to-day; yet he is well repaid for his labours because his sympathies are aroused when he perceives how thoroughly in earnest the good men were.



John Witherspoon

They had no monopoly of earnestness, however. The Loyalists replied in speeches, sermons, and pamphlets that were fuller of sincere feeling and strong reasoning than the Whigs cared to admit. Chief among these Loyalists, perhaps, in point of influence was the lawyer Joseph Galloway, of Pennsylvania. A vigorous writer and preacher on the

**Seabury and
the Loyalists.**

same side was the Rev. Jonathan Boucher, pastor in Virginia and in Maryland. Both these men, with many others who thought like them, were forced into permanent exile in England. A better fate awaited the most interesting of the Loyalist pamphleteers, the Rev. Samuel Seabury; for after the Revolution he became Episcopal Bishop of Connecticut—the first of his order consecrated



S. Bp. Connect

for service in America. His church was particularly attached to the crown and opposed to the popular cause, and Seabury eloquently expressed its sentiments shortly after the Continental Congress of 1774 proposed a non-importation, non-exportation agreement. While incumbent of St. Peter's, Westchester, New York, he is-

sued in rapid succession four pamphlets signed "A Westchester Farmer," dealing so vigorously with his opponents that, not content with answering him in kind, they reviled, threatened, and imprisoned him. The Loyalists may have been sadly mistaken men, but the insults and injuries to which they were subjected dim the glory of the Revolutionary patriots.

Between extreme advocates of the popular cause like the famous politician Samuel Adams, of Massachusetts, who by his shrewd manipulation of political machinery and his incessant writing of all sorts did as much as any other single man to foment the Revolutionary spirit, and

Dickinson
and the
"Farmer's
Letters."

convinced Loyalists like Seabury and Boucher, stood, as might have been expected, quite a large body of conservative patriots who censured heartily the oppressive and foolish acts of the British ministers, but at the same time hung back from urging the colonies to resist by force and secure their independence. Typical of these conservatives and one of the ablest publicists of his time was John Dickinson, of Pennsylvania (1732-1808), who had diligently studied



John Adams

law both in Philadelphia and in London. In 1767, after Charles Townshend by his notorious Acts had shown that the British still misunderstood the temper of the Americans, Dickinson pub-

lished in Philadelphia newspapers a series of *Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies*, in which he tried to gain from both sides calm consideration of the grave questions at issue. His excellent and still readable letters were published in book form in many places both in America and abroad, and won the praise of distinguished men; but in a crisis no book, however able, can make



John Dickinson

reason take the place of passion. A few years later, Dickinson drafted the most important of the state

papers that gave such lustre to the First Continental Congress in the eyes of European publicists. He is often called the "Penman of the American Revolution;" but he opposed the Declaration of Independence, although he fought as a private in the ranks, and his influence declined before that of the more radical Jefferson.

Undoubtedly the pamphleteer of all others who did most to bring the colonists to the point of declaring their independence was an Englishman who had just come among them, the notorious Thomas, or as he is usually called, Tom Paine (1737-1809). Paine had failed in a variety of callings before in 1774, through



T. Paine

the recommendation of Franklin, he secured journalistic work in Philadelphia. The political confusion brought out his genius. Early in January, 1776, he published a pamphlet entitled *Common Sense*, of which within three months one hundred and twenty thousand copies were sold in America. This was a tremendous sale, and it was due to the fact that Paine argued boldly and clearly for independence as the only practical solution of the difficulties in which the colonies were involved. He was not a subtle reasoner, he could not see the strength of other men's arguments, he thought he knew much more about law and history than he did, he gave free expression to his prejudices; nevertheless he carried his readers with him by his strong sense and his courage. Late in 1776, he began issuing a series of papers entitled *The Crisis*, which did good in many ways, especially by giving due credit

to Washington's genius at a time when numerous persons were censuring the policy of that hero. Paine's other works do not concern us here, since his famous *Rights of Man* (1791) was inspired by Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*, and his *Age of Reason* by his opposition to Christian orthodoxy. He fell into disrepute and poverty, and his name is still to many persons a synonym for depravity; but his services to the cause of American liberty should not be forgotten, even by those who in the main judge harshly his life and writings.

More subtle and brilliant than Paine, indeed the most subtle and brilliant of all the Revolutionary leaders, was the author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, of Virginia (1743–1826). Jefferson's career, like that of Wash-

Thomas
Jefferson.

ington, some of whose public papers, such as his Farewell Address, are true political classics, belongs so much more to the history of public affairs than to that of literature that an account of his varied life would be out of place here. He was less of a man of letters than Franklin, since his only book, *Notes on Virginia*, written in 1782, is far from being such a masterpiece as



MONTICELLO.

the famous *Autobiography*. Yet the Declaration, for all its rhetoric, is a masterly document of its kind, and

probably no more influential letter-writer than Jefferson can be named among Americans. The political and social aspirations of the young nation during the first half century of its existence are expressed in his hundreds of letters with unexampled fulness and vividness; his own versatility in every branch of human knowledge and his interesting personality are likewise revealed in them; hence, although he is in no sense a literary artist, he is in many senses a most important writer.



THOMAS JEFFERSON.

The success of the great political experiment made by the American colonists was not settled by the victory at Yorktown in 1781 or by the sign-

ing of the Treaty of
Hamilton
and Madison.

Paris in 1783. It remained to be seen what use the colonists would make of their independence—whether they would become citizens of a number of small rival states or citizens of a large united republic. The Articles of Confederation were not ratified until 1781, and they furnished a most feeble and insufficient form of government. The separate States showed, especially by their bad financial legislation, that they had very little ability to govern themselves. Statesmen like Washington, Alex-



A Hamilton

ander Hamilton, of New York, and James Madison, of Virginia, felt that something must be done to prevent anarchy, and finally with the help of others they secured the convening of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and the framing of the new Constitution. This great instrument had then to be defended, for many eminent leaders like Patrick Henry were opposed to its adoption. Its written defence was in the main undertaken by the brilliant Hamilton, who relied upon the assistance of Madison and, to a much less extent, upon that of John Jay.



James Madison

This trio published in two New York newspapers, from October, 1787, to April, 1788, a series of about seventy-five letters signed "Publicus." These discussed the various departments of the proposed government and defended the experiment with arguments drawn with learning and subtlety from history and political theory. In 1788, they were published under the title of *The Federalist* and were increased to the number of eighty-five. Their influence upon public opinion and upon political leaders was immediate and great, though apparently not so great as that of Paine's pamphlets. For over a century the volume has been regarded as a storehouse of political wisdom by both American and foreign students. The authorship of some of the papers is in dispute, the better opinion, perhaps, giving them to Madison rather than to Hamilton. Madison is also entitled to be regarded as the more learned and conservative of the two statesmen; but Hamilton has

**The
Federalist.**

the credit of having planned the series of letters and was altogether the abler man. He had come forward when a mere youth as an influential speaker and writer on the Revolutionary side; and it is clear that he, as well as his senior, John Adams, should be remembered with great gratitude among the Americans who put their pens at the service of their country in its hour of peril.

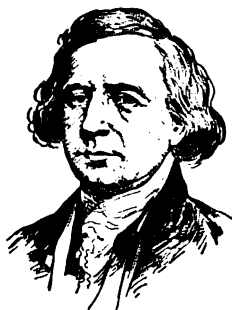
While clergymen, lawyers, journalists, and statesmen had the larger share in bringing on and supporting the

Revolution, the cause was effectively served
Poets of the by writers of a more specifically literary
Revolution.

kind. For example, a large number of patriotic ballads and songs were written to be sung at campfires and other gatherings of Whigs and Tories. These, save in a few cases, had little poetic merit, but were scarcely less serviceable on that account. Two Loyalist poets, Joseph Stansbury, of New York, and the Rev. Jonathan Odell, of New Jersey, displayed enough art in their songs, odes, and satires to preserve their names, and this is also true of the patriotic Judge Francis Hopkinson, of Philadelphia, Signer of the Declaration and author of a humorous ballad, "The Battle of the Kegs," and of a satiric prose allegory, entitled *A Pretty Story*, which were widely circulated and admired. Hopkinson was a man of varied accomplishments, whose works were published in three volumes; but these are forgotten while the patriotic lyric of his son Joseph, the famous "Hail Columbia" (1798), seems likely to be remembered as long as the United States is a nation. The fate of the other Revolutionary poets has been more or less that of the elder Hopkinson, but there are four of them who deserve special mention and some praise.

Much the best of these—a genuine poet whose work

has at last been given to the world in a convenient edition—is Philip Freneau, who was born in New York, of Huguenot parentage, January 2, 1752. He graduated at Princeton, taught school and served on a newspaper, made a long sojourn in the West Indies, and became a sailor. Then he fitted out a vessel to fight the British, but was captured on his first voyage and imprisoned on a filthy prison-ship at New York. After his release he wrote poems and articles and made voyages as commander of a brig. In a few years he married and became an editor, siding with Jefferson and attacking Washington and Hamilton with savage vigour. Then he turned farmer and later took to the sea again. He retired finally to a home in New Jersey and died there on December 18, 1832, having lost his way one night in a snow-storm and fallen in the road.



Philip Freneau

Such a career seems scarcely that of a man of letters, and it must be confessed that most of Freneau's writing during the latter half of his life shows little of that ripened thought and art which we expect of the author who conscientiously develops his powers throughout a long life. Nor, save occasionally, does he display the originality rightly demanded of great poets. Freneau's really vital poetry is to be found in the satires against the British and the Tories written while he was a young man, and in a few meditative and descriptive poems published before he was forty. In the main he followed British models in his satires, but

**Philip
Freneau.**

**Freneau's
poetry.**

he was more effective, especially in his "British Prison-Ship," than imitators usually are. His "Beauties of Santa Cruz," and his weird poem, "The House of Night," are more attractive, on the whole, to modern readers; yet, after all, his fame rests and will continue to rest on four or five short occasional poems such as "The Wild Honey-suckle," the stanzas on the soldiers that fell at Eutaw Springs, "The Indian Student," and "The Indian Burying-Ground." These show an imagination and a felicity of expression not to be found in any of Freneau's American predecessors or contemporaries in the art of song. Scott and Campbell borrowed lines from the sailor-poet, and Wordsworth might well have admired the sympathy with nature so charmingly expressed in the poem that follows:

THE WILD HONEY-SUCKLE

Fair flower, that dost so comely grow,
Hid in this silent, dull retreat,
Untouched thy honeyed blossoms blow,
Unseen thy little branches greet;
No roving foot shall crush thee here,
No busy hand provoke a tear.

By nature's self in white arrayed,
She bade thee shun the vulgar eye,
And planted here the guardian shade,
And sent soft waters murmuring by;
Thus quietly thy summer goes,
Thy days declining to repose.

Smit with those charms, that must decay,
I grieve to see your future doom;
They died—nor were those flowers more gay,
The flowers that did in Eden bloom;
Unpitying frosts and autumn's power
Shall leave no vestige of this flower.

From morning suns and evening dews
 At first thy little being came;
 If nothing once, you nothing lose,
 For when you die you are the same;
 The space between is but an hour,
 The frail duration of a flower.

The most popular satirist of the Revolutionary period was not Freneau, but John Trumbull, of Connecticut (1750-1831), author of the famous, but now little read, *McFingal*. He was a most precocious child and is said to have passed the examination for entrance into Yale at the age of seven, although he did not actually enter until he was thirteen. After graduation he became a tutor and spent much time in writing, one of the results of his labours being a satire upon provincial ignorance, "The Progress of Dulness." In 1773, he went to Boston to read law under John Adams, and there he was inspired with Revolutionary ardour. Returning to New Haven, he began writing *McFingal*, the first instalment of which was



John Trumbull

issued in January, 1776. This imitation of Butler's *Hudibras* speedily became popular at home and abroad, and in the main deserved its success. The mock-heroic adventures of the burlesque Tory hero who gives the poem its name, the long speeches, the purely local references rather fatigue readers to-day; but Trumbull managed his couplets well, and packed them with learning,

common sense, patriotism, and a fair amount of wit. He completed his poem in 1782, and after that applied himself chiefly to the law. His once-acclaimed masterpiece has not kept his memory very green; but some of his verses, such as

A thief ne'er felt the halter draw
With good opinion of the law,

have been quoted as Butler's.

Trumbull was but one of a number of Connecticut men who at that time devoted themselves to the task of producing a literature for youthful America. A group of them, known from their place of residence as the Hartford Wits, wrote satires and more serious poems now almost completely forgotten. One of their leaders was Joel Barlow, who, along with Trumbull and Timothy Dwight, fills a small niche in the history of American literary effort. The rank and file of the Wits are as little remembered as their works; but their zeal for letters, especially that of Colonel David Humphreys, Washington's aide-de-camp and the biographer of Israel Putnam, deserves recognition.

Timothy Dwight seemed to his contemporaries a very great man in every sense. He was a grandson of Jonathan Edwards and was born at Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1752. He graduated from Yale, became an army chaplain, served as pastor and taught school at Greenfield, Connecticut, and from 1795 until his death in 1817 filled the presidential chair at his alma mater. He published numerous poems, among them an artificial epic, in the classic style of the times, on a scriptural subject, *The Conquest of Canaan* (1785); he expounded theology in five volumes; he

preached powerful sermons. Yet he is almost unreadable to-day except in his patriotic song, "Columbia," written



Samuel May Dwight

when he was an army chaplain; his hymn, "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord;" and the four volumes of his *Travels in New England and New York*, which contain much valuable information. Dwight was undoubtedly an able man; like many of his contemporaries he strove to do great things for his country's scholarship and literature; but in his case, as nearly always, too much

self-consciousness of effort resulted in a lamentably small permanent achievement.

Much the same thing may be said of the literary labours of Dwight's compatriot, Joel Barlow (1754-1812), who

was also a graduate of Yale and an army chaplain. Barlow

gave up the ministry and became a lawyer, editor, and man of affairs; but he could not give up the idea of writing a great American epic. In 1787, he published his *Vision of Columbus*, which gained him many easily satisfied readers. Then he went abroad in the interest of a company of land speculators, entered business in France and made a small



J. Barlow

fortune, saw many great men and stirring times, and served his country in diplomatic affairs. Returning to America in 1805, he endeavoured to crown his life by a masterpiece, and in 1807 issued his *Vision* in a revised and expanded form as *The Columbiad*. It was published in a most sumptuous style, but taste had changed and the laborious performance was received with ridicule. It still remains unread and is cited as a warning to would-be poets, although it is no worse than not a few elaborate English poems equally unread but spoken of with respect.

The irony of fate is seen in the fact that Barlow's fame rests on a short, homely mock-heroic, *The Hasty Pudding*, written on the occasion of his being unexpectedly regaled in France with this favourite dish. His interesting letters, his political

Barlow's
fame.

treatises, his shabby treatment at the hands of the Federalists—he was a pronounced Democratic-Republican—his diplomatic services to his country are scarcely remembered—mainly because he wrote a big book that failed. Yet this man loved America enough to forsake its comforts in his old age and to risk the dangers of war in order to help President Madison by conducting negotiations with Napoleon. His body still lies in the little Polish village where he died during the famous retreat from Moscow.

Most of the prose written during the Revolutionary period naturally dealt with politics, but as naturally some of it dealt with the history and the external features of the country for which men were giving their lives. Few of these books have special literary merit, but one or two deserve to be mentioned. Jonathan Carver's *Travels Through the Interior Parts of North America* is interesting enough to represent the

Prose writers.

works written by the travellers and naturalists; Governor Thomas Hutchinson's (1711-80) *History of Massachusetts* is scholarly enough to represent the labours of the historians. Hutchinson was an able and conscientious man whose loyalty to King George brought upon him public opprobrium in Massachusetts and forced him to take refuge in England. The honesty of the man and the impartiality and value of his book are now generally recognised.



John Hutchinson

Two prose writers of the period are still read for the literary

quality of their chief books. One of these is the Quaker, John Woolman (1720-72), a native of New Jersey, a tailor by trade, who travelled much through the colonies, preaching the doctrines of his sect, and died in England while on a mission to the Friends there. He was one of the earliest opponents of slavery and wrote tracts against it. He is remembered, however, for his *Journal*, a sincere record of his unselfish life and his spiritual experiences. Its style is unaffected, and it brings the reader in touch with a pure and noble although somewhat limited character.

The other writer, still occasionally read, was a very different sort of person. J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur (1735-1813) was a Frenchman of noble extraction who emigrated to America early in life and after some years became a farmer in New York. He suffered greatly, both in his person and in his family,

during the Revolution. After that he served as French consul in New York City, and spent his last years in France. The book that preserves his name is his *Letters from an American Farmer*, published in London in 1782. Crèvecoeur translated it into French and enlarged it, and other translations were issued, for it speedily became popular. It has since been comparatively neglected, although, with the exception of his friend Franklin's *Autobiography*, it is probably the most readable book written in America before the nineteenth century. It is full of pastoral charm—a true idyl that embodies an ideal of America that has never been realized, but is none the less attractive. It describes the beauties of nature in the new world with a love and skill rare in Crèvecoeur's day; it gives interesting descriptions of the life led by farmers and sailors; it presents vividly the conflict of emotions in the breast of a man who was divided between loyalty to his king and love for his struggling country. "In short, Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* is both a book worth reading for its own sake and one worth remembering as an excellent illustration of the truth that American literature has always been and must always be a product of old-world culture modified by new-world conditions. In its pages literary tradition blends with the buoyant spirit of a new nation in the making and with the charm of virgin rivers and hills and plains."

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR CHAPTER III

A. For General and Special Works and Anthologies, see the Bibliography at the end of Chapter I.

B. **Helps for Further Study.**—The great authority on the literature of the Revolution is Prof. Moses Coit Tyler's *The Literary History of the American Revolution* (2 vols., 1897).

There are numerous biographies of the statesmen mentioned, and, if the bibliographies in Tyler, Wendell, or Trent do not suffice, Channing and Hart's valuable *Guide to American History* (1896) may be consulted. There is a life of Dickinson by C. J. Stillé (1891), and an edition of his political writings by P. L. Ford (1895). His *Farmer's Letters* were reissued in 1903. The best edition of Paine's writings is that in four volumes by Moncure D. Conway (1894-96), who is also the author of a life of Paine (2 vols., 1892). The best edition of Jefferson is that by P. L. Ford (10 vols., 1892-99), who also edited *The Federalist* (1898). *The Loyal Verses of Stansbury and Odell* (1860), edited by Winthrop Sargent, and Frank Moore's *Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution* (1856) will give a good idea of the miscellaneous verse of the period. Freneau's poems are being edited by Prof. F. L. Pattee in three volumes (1903-04). Trumbull's *McFingal* was edited by B. J. Lossing in 1860. For a good account of Joel Barlow, see his *Life and Letters* by Charles Burr Todd (1886), and for both Barlow and Dwight, Prof. M. C. Tyler's *Three Men of Letters* (1895). There is an edition of Woolman's *Journal* with an introduction by Whittier (1872) and a cheaper one in Macmillan's *English Classics* (1903). Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* have just been edited by Ludwig Lewisohn (1904).

CHAPTER IV

TRANSITIONAL WRITERS (1789-1808)

Character of the period. WHEN Washington, in 1789, took his seat as first President, an important era was opened in the history of popular government. It seemed to many enthusiasts that the whole face of the world would be changed and that America would lead the nations to heights of material, intellectual, and spiritual greatness never before dreamed of. This millennium did not arrive, however, quite in accordance with expectations. The French Revolution encouraged the enthusiasts, but it brought out the fact that Americans were, in the main, conservatives who were shocked by the French excesses. When the liberal and democratic Jefferson was elected President, thousands of his fellow citizens believed that the reign of Antichrist had begun. In other words, instead of being a race of demi-gods the American people a century and a quarter ago were a nation of farmers and traders of good morals, little culture, and exceptional commercial prospects. Even "American enterprise" was only in its infancy; "American comfort," in the modern sense of the phrase, was scarcely more evident; and, as for American literature and art, they were in no such flourishing condition as to warrant great boastfulness. We can now see that this state of things was only natural. The colonists had achieved their Revolution and their new Constitution after great labours;

their first work as citizens of a new nation was to settle political questions and improve their material condition. They could no more create a new literature or lead mankind in the arts and sciences than they could change the colour of their skins. All they could accomplish at first was some creditable painting, a few important discoveries and inventions, and the publication of some books and magazines that proved the interest taken in literature by earnest men and women.

At the beginning of the Revolution Philadelphia was the most important town on the continent and the centre of literary production. This position it continued to hold until the end of the eighteenth century and a few years beyond; but the advance marked by the work of Franklin, Godfrey, and Evans was scarcely maintained. As public-spirited citizens and voluminous writers on many subjects of popular utility, Dr. Richard Rush, a philanthropic physician, and Mathew Carey, an enterprising publisher, kept up the tradition of Franklin, but could not rival him in genius. In poetry only the light verses and the satires of William Clifton, who eschewed the sobriety of his Quaker ancestors, need be remembered. The most important Philadelphia writer of our period, the novelist Charles Brockden Brown, will be discussed later in this chapter.

New England and its centre, Boston, had their favourite native authors, some of whom, such as Trumbull and Dwight, have been already discussed. Several of the most highly esteemed writers were women. One, Mrs. Mercy Warren, a sister of James Otis, the orator, wrote unactable and unreadable tragedies and a ponderous *History of the American*

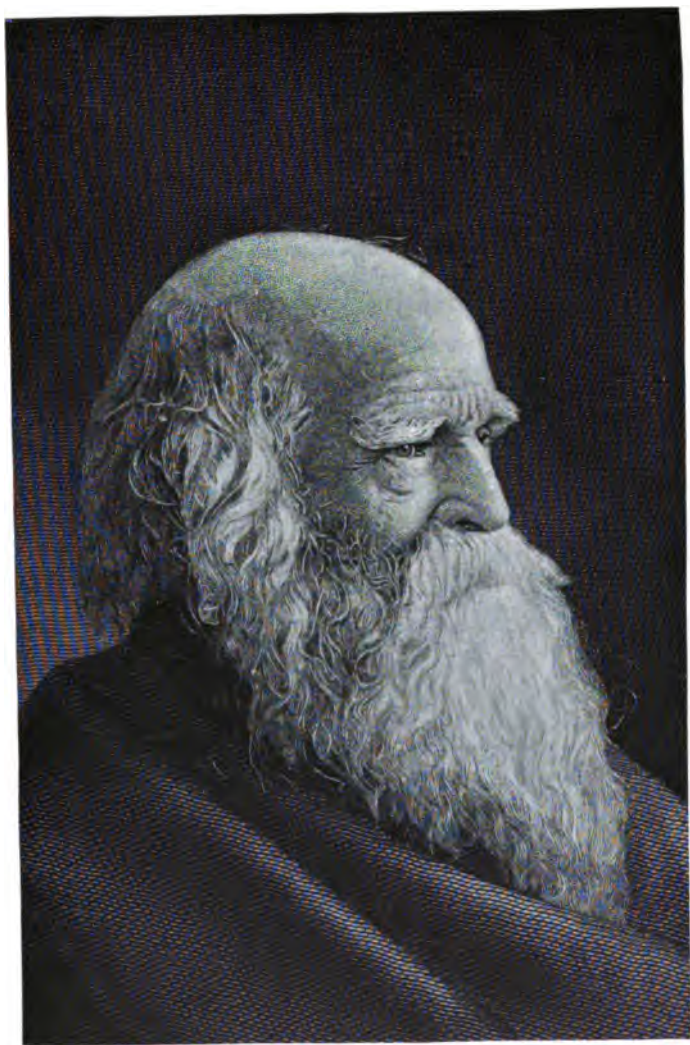
**Philadelphia
writers.**

**New England
writers.**

Revolution. Another, Mrs. Susanna Rowson, an Englishwoman by birth, who abandoned the stage to keep a school for girls in Boston, wrote numerous plays, poems, and novels which both delighted and edified her contemporaries. One of her stories, *Charlotte Temple* (1790), is still read in cheap editions by sentimental persons. It is a tale of a beautiful girl who dies on account of a man's faithlessness—a topic much affected by writers of the period. But the pathos of the story is almost smothered by Mrs. Rowson's stilted solemnity. Another woman writer of Massachusetts, now less remembered than Mrs. Warren or Mrs. Rowson, was Mrs. Sarah Wentworth Morton, who wrote what may be considered the earliest American novel, *The Power of Sympathy* (1789), and poems memorable for their sentimentality.

Mrs. Morton exchanged poetical tributes with the chief contemporary poet of the other sex, Robert Treat Paine, Jr. (1773–1811), whose career demands a word. He was the son of a Signer of the Declaration of Independence and graduated at Harvard, where he won a reputation for verses, the excellence of which would now be questioned by almost any reader. Then he tried business, journalism, and literature—especially poetry and dramatic criticism, his fondness for the drama leading to his marrying an actress and being disowned by his father. An attempt to practise law finally proved a failure, and he died in destitution. Such a career would not have seemed strange in crowded Europe; but in America, where every one could easily earn a living, it seemed so strange that many persons thought Paine must be a genius. His complete works were published the year after his death and edited with the care due to a classic; yet within a few years his name was

**Robert Treat
Paine.**



William Cullen Bryant

almost forgotten except when some one recalled his martial ode, "Adams and Liberty." He illustrates in a pathetic way the zeal of his countrymen to discover literary swans among their increasing flocks of—writers.

The theatre, which, in a sense, proved to be Paine's undoing, was a comparatively new thing in America. Special

buildings had been set apart for dramatic representations early in the eighteenth century, but it is not clear that professional

Early American drama.

actors performed in them before 1752. After that theatres sprang up; mainly in the Southern and Middle colonies, for Puritan New England looked upon the stage as an instrument of the evil one. But by 1794 Boston itself had gained a permanent play-house. Native dramatists were even scarcer than actors and theatres, the premature talents of Godfrey not being paralleled. In 1787, however, a native American comedy was applauded at the John Street Theatre in New York. It was entitled *The Contrast*, and was written by Royall Tyler (1757–1826), who afterward became a judge in Vermont as well as a critic and the author of poems and an early novel. His first performance was the most sprightly thing he ever wrote and, although imitative, deserves to be remembered as having introduced to literature the genuine Yankee speaking his own dialect.

Tyler did not follow up well his first success, but another young American, William Dunlap (1766–1839), took his

place and for years provided the New York stage with plays. They were mainly adaptations of dramas by the German play-wright

William Dunlap.

Kotzebue; but sometimes, as in *André*, Dunlap at least managed to make the dream of a native drama appear not a grossly improbable one. He also furthered the cause

of the plastic arts, wrote biographies of Charles Brockden Brown and of George Frederick Cooke, the actor, as well as an important *History of the American Theatre* (1832), and deserves to be remembered as a useful man and writer.

Like the drama, American fiction was tardy in making its appearance, and for somewhat similar reasons; but unlike the

The growth of fiction.

drama, fiction soon made good its claim to an important place in the national literature. The stories of Mrs. Rowson and Mrs. Morton encouraged other New

England ladies to compose exemplary novels that need not be named, and Royall Tyler and Judge Hugh Henry Brackenridge, of Pennsylvania, held them company. The latter's voluminous production, *Modern Chivalry*, was really a satire on democracy and does not interfere with the claim of Charles Brockden Brown to be regarded as the first important novelist of America.

Brown, who was also the first American to trust to his pen for his support and thus to earn the title of a true man of letters, was born in Philadelphia in 1771, and died there in 1810. He came of Quaker stock, injured his health by his studies, read law, and then against the advice of his family determined to follow literature as a profession. He went to New York and in 1797 wrote *Alcuin*, a bold discussion of the question of marriage and divorce. Then within four years, writing with little system and keeping several



Wm Dunlap

Charles Brockden Brown.

stories going at once, he wrote and published six novels or romances, and, as if this were not enough, edited a new magazine. Returning to his native city, he conducted another magazine for a few years, edited an *Annual Register* of events, wrote political pamphlets, and also occupied himself with geographical and historical works, which remained unfinished at the time of his early death from consumption. No previous American had been gifted with such a prolific, and, on the whole, powerful imagination, or had pursued the literary life so unremittingly. There is little reason, however, to believe that he would have improved his work and increased his fame had his life been spared, for he had practically ceased for some years to produce creative literature.

Although Brown was popular in his generation both in America and in England—Shelley, for example, admired him greatly—and although he has been highly praised by some good critics, no recent attempt to

Brown as a writer.

induce people to read him has succeeded, nor is he likely ever to be restored to favour. This is partly due to the fact that he belonged to the extravagantly romantic school of William Godwin and Mrs. Radcliffe, writers whose attempts to deal with uncanny and thrilling subjects have also greatly declined in popularity. Then again, Brown's individual merits—



E. B. Brown

his more genuine sense for the truly terrible than that possessed by his British models, his vivid powers of

description, his early and bold use of local colour, of American characters and environment, his learning, his industry, and his devotion to the cause of pure literature—all these characteristics that make him important to the student are neutralized, so far as the reader is concerned, by an almost complete lack of charm in his style and by an equal lack of art in the choice and arrangement of the materials out of which he constructed his stories. But it should be remembered that he is forgotten because subsequent writers of fiction like Hawthorne and Poe have improved upon his successes and probably profited from his warning failures.

Brown's strongest story is his first—*Wieland* (1798), a tale of the terrible sufferings of a Pennsylvanian family resulting from a ventriloquist's evil use of his remarkable gift. Here Brown's power to thrill his readers with horror is seen at its height. His next romance, *Ormond; or the Secret Witness* (1798), in its immaculate heroine and impossible villain, as well as in its general sentimentality, illustrates Brown's defects; but it contains a strong description of Philadelphia ravaged by the yellow fever. This last feature is more powerfully brought out in *Arthur Mervyn* (1800–01), its author's most elaborate book, which suffers from a mixed plot and from many extravagances of detail, but is nevertheless full of imagination. The merits and defects of these three romances are so thoroughly exemplified in their companions that special comment upon the latter is not necessary.¹

¹ Their names are *Edgar Huntley*, *Clara Howard*, and *Jane Talbot*—all published in 1801. Dunlap's biography of Brown contains some slight pieces of fiction and unfinished tales. *Edgar Huntley*, the story of a somnambulist, makes use of wild scenery and of Indian atrocities,

The remaining writers belonging to this period mean even less to modern readers than Brown does. Few persons know anything of Joseph Dennie (1768-1812), although he once had a host of admirers, who called him "The American Addison." He was a native of Boston and a graduate of Harvard, who, as editor of *The Farmer's Weekly Museum*, built up a small literary circle at Walpole, New Hampshire. His essays, entitled *The Lay Preacher* (1796), were widely circulated and helped to educate his countrymen. Removing to Philadelphia, he began in 1801 to edit a literary weekly, *The Portfolio*, which for some years was the most influential journal of its kind in the country. Dennie was stilted in his style and absurdly subservient to British taste in matters of culture; he was a true exponent of colonial lack of independence; but he deserves to be remembered as an early student and editor of Shakespeare and as a man who served literature according to his lights.

Better known than Dennie, because his *Dictionary and Spelling Book* have been serviceable to millions, is the Connecticut lexicographer, Noah Webster (1758-1843), who wrote pamphlets and essays on almost every conceivable subject and rarely failed to display considerable intelligence in what he wrote. With him we naturally associate the famous grammarian, Lindley Murray (1745-1826), whose works, including his curiously prim *Memoirs*, were, however, written in England, where he spent the latter part of his life. Webster and Murray might justly be omitted

thus showing that Brown was a predecessor of Cooper, just as in his use of the mysterious and terrible he was a precursor of Hawthorne and Poe.

from any survey of American literature which included only writers endowed with style and imagination; yet



Noah Webster.

something is lost when any author of a really influential book is passed over in silence. From this point of view they are worthy of remembrance, and with them two writers of biographies ought to be mentioned, not because the latter any more than the former pair were literary men of much power, but because their best-known books were so widely

read and did so much to form the ideals of Americans of three generations ago.

The first of these writers is "Parson" Mason L. Weems, of Virginia, who seems to have invented the famous cherry-tree-and-hatchet story for use in his immensely popular *Life of George Washington* (1800). Weems, in this and his other naïve

**Weems and
Wirt.**

books, apparently believed that a moral end justifies a questionable means; but he was not alone in this opinion and was a good man who led a rather picturesque life. The other writer is the more dignified William Wirt (1772-1834), born in Maryland but long resident in Virginia and in Washington, distinguished as an advocate and for many years Attorney-General of the United States. In the early part of the nineteenth century Wirt was the most conspicuous literary man of the South, but he was

never much more than a cultivated amateur. His *Letters of the British Spy* (1803), papers dealing mainly with noted orators, was long popular, but his best known book, the only one read to-day, is his *Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry* (1817). This, like Weems's *Washington*, is by no means reliable as to facts, yet that, with all its rhetoric, it is characterized by literary power is shown by the fact that it created a legendary portrait of the great orator which no subsequent biographers have been able to replace with a true one. Wirt's fame is also kept alive by his eloquent speech at the trial of Aaron Burr, from which school-boys love to declaim; but his correspondence furnishes a better proof of his real abilities.

Wirt and all the other writers mentioned in this chapter, in spite of the fact that they are little read and

Importance of these writers. deserve but slight praise on account of their many limitations,

give abundant proof that American literature was steadily maturing to the point of development when books of permanent charm and power of style and of intrinsic value of substance would be given to the world. It is for this reason that it is worth while to recall the names of books which we shall not, unless we are special

students, be expected to read. Only in this way can we fully realize the truth that in every phase of human activity, including the production of literature, while in-



George Washington Wirt

dividual genius counts for much, the genius of the race and the spirit of the times count for more.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR CHAPTER IV

A. For General and Special Works and Anthologies, see the Bibliography at the end of Chapter I.

B. **Helps for Further Study.**—Tyler's *Contrast*, edited by T. J. McKee, was the first number of *The Dunlap Society Publications* (1887). Some of Dunlap's plays have also been published by this Society. The latest edition of Brown's novels is in six volumes, Philadelphia, 1887. See the sketch of Brown in W. H. Prescott's *Miscellanies* (1845), reprinted from Sparks's *American Biography*, vol. i. For Noah Webster, see the biography by Horace E. Scudder in the *American Men of Letters* (1882), and for Wirt and his correspondence, the *Memoirs* by John P. Kennedy (2 vols., 1849). For fuller information about the writers of this period, consult Trent, chapter ix and the Bibliography, pp. 586-87.

CHAPTER V

THE EARLY KNICKERBOCKERS (1809-29)

THE year 1809 is famous in American literature because it saw the publication of Irving's *Knickerbocker's History* and the births of Poe and Holmes.

**Character of
the period.**

It is important in political history because it marked the beginning of a new administration, which was finally forced to abandon Jefferson's policy of neutrality and to fight a second struggle for independence, the War of 1812. It also saw the birth of Abraham Lincoln and the rise to political prominence of young statesmen like Henry Clay, who were to develop more national lines of policy. Revolutionary leaders like Jefferson continued to exert influence, but the country was growing rapidly, and self-made men like Andrew Jackson were coming more to the front. New States in the West and Southwest were opened up by emigrants from the East; steam-boats gave an impetus to travel and business; New York, owing to the Erie Canal, became the largest city and most important business centre in the country; in spite of war and financial depression the country was growing more prosperous and the people more energetic and keen-minded. The time was as ripe for new authors as for new statesmen and new methods of business.

The first man of letters to address and hold the new American public was a native of the city which was des-

timed for some years to succeed Philadelphia as the literary centre of the country. Washington Irving was born in New York, April 3, 1783. He came of mingled Scotch and English stock and his rearing was more or less British in tone, a fact which partly accounts for the further fact often urged against him, that his writings are as much British as American in character. He was a delicate boy and could not go to college, but this did not keep him from trying his hand at writing essays which he subscribed "Jonathan Oldstyle." In 1804, he was sent to Europe for his health and was much improved physically and mentally by two years of travel. In 1807, although he had been admitted to the bar, he showed that literature was his vocation by joining in the writing of *Salmagundi*, a periodical miscellany of the *Spectator* type, which although more or less imitative, greatly pleased the readers of New York. Irving's fellow labourers in this enterprise were his elder brother William and the latter's brother-in-law, James Kirk Paulding (1779-1860), an author who by his satires, biographies, and novels, such as *The Dutchman's Fireside*, obtained a considerable, but transitory, reputation, which was enhanced by the fact that he was Secretary of the Navy under Van Buren.

Shortly after the success of *Salmagundi*, Irving met with a loss that saddened the remainder of his life. The attractive young woman to whom he was engaged died of consumption. He gave evidence of the depth of his affection by never marrying, and doubtless the tender sentiment of his books owed something to his loss. He did not repine, however, for he soon began with his brother Peter to write a parody of a book about New York, and when Peter

Irving's
early years.

The Knicker-
bocker His-
tory.

Irving went to Europe, Washington developed their joint work into the famous humorous history of "the renowned Island of New York," which purports to be the composition of the learned and quaint old antiquary, Diedrich Knickerbocker. From the day of its publication to the present time this genial performance has not lacked admiring readers, and no better testimony to its merits is needed than the fact that Sir Walter Scott enjoyed it. It is often asserted that the book has created a legendary history of New York which genuine historians have not been able to correct, so far as the general public is concerned. This is at least conclusive evidence of its author's creative powers.

Irving did not at once follow up his success with another good book; indeed, he showed himself to be a little more indolent than a true genius is wont to be. He engaged in business; he did some editing; he went to England in 1815 to attend to his own and his brothers' commercial interests there; he had a charming time even after their joint business failed—and perhaps it was just as well that he let his talents mature. About ten years after Diedrich Knickerbocker's *History* he at last gave the world a book, and this proved to be his master-piece.

The Sketch-Book was published in parts in America in 1819 and in England in 1820. Its success was instantaneous, and it is still read with pleasure wherever the English language is spoken, as well as in foreign countries like Germany and Japan. Some fastidious readers object to the sentimentality and the formal style of the book, and any one may feel that some of the topics have lost their freshness; but the day will probably never come when "Rip Van Winkle,"

"The Spectre Bridegroom," and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" will cease to please healthy-minded persons.

The three pieces just named are among the best short stories in the language, and as they are also among the first in time, Irving deserves the credit of being a pioneer in a most delightful form of modern fiction. *The Sketch-Book* also won him a place in British literature, since in "Christmas Eve" and in "Little Britain" he gave hints to Charles Dickens. In fact, he is a link between Addison

Irving as a
writer of
fiction and
humour.

and Goldsmith and the great author of *The Pickwick Papers*. *The Sketch-Book* not only made Irving famous, but brought him enough money



SUNNYSIDE, IRVING'S HOME.

to enable him to cultivate his taste for travel. He saw much of Germany, France, and Spain, and in the last-named country found a source of inspiration that was to dominate much of his after life. Before he published his *Life of Columbus*, however, in 1828, he had made two other ventures in creative literature. *Bracebridge Hall* (1822) continued his pictures of English country life and contained the delightful sketch of "The Stout Gentleman," while *Tales of a Traveller* (1824) was its author's most sustained attempt at fiction. Critical opinion is scarcely favourable to the latter book as a whole, but at

least the story of "The Bold Dragoon" is excellent in its grotesque vein.

With the exception of *The Alhambra* (1832), which has been justly called "The Spanish Sketch-Book," the books written by Irving after he became interested in Spanish history represented on the whole a decline of creative power. His charm of manner remained, however, and one or two of his biographies rank high among his works. *The Conquest of Granada* appeared in 1829, the year Irving was appointed Secretary of Legation at London. Three years later he returned to America after his long exile and was there greeted with honours and applause of all kinds. Americans took to their hearts the first of their countrymen who had taken rank with the great living men of letters of the world. Irving wore his honours with becoming modesty, and after a journey to the West, which resulted in *Astoria* and two other books, he settled at his country home, Sunnyside. From 1842 to 1846 he served as Minister to Spain and laboured upon an elaborate biography of Washington. He continued this labour after his return and also wrote less important books, one of them being his charming *Life of Goldsmith* (1849), which at least showed that he had not lost his skill as an essayist. The first volume of his *Washington* appeared in 1855, the fifth and last shortly before his death, which took place on November 28, 1859. It was not a great work from the point of view of modern scholarship, for Irving was not a trained historian and biographer; but it was a worthy tribute from the practical founder of American literature to the chief founder of the Republic.

For many years it has been the fashion among fastidious critics and readers to underrate Irving's genius.

They find his style formal and old-fashioned, his sentimentality wearisome, his æsthetic sense and his intellectual powers lacking in distinction. There is some truth in these charges, but they are emphasised without due regard to Irving's merits. His nature was genial and healthy, his style was marked by easy grace, his humour was delightfully lambent and without a touch of malice, his sympathy for men of all classes and countries was abundant and contagious—in short, he was a lovable man possessed of broad, genuine literary powers that warrant his admirers in continuing to read and praise his four or five best books. As we have seen, some of his work had an English flavour; but this is easily accounted for, and we are not warranted in forgetting that much of his writing is American in tone and substance. He was the first American short-story writer, essayist, and man of letters of conspicuous ability; he was not merely, as detractors have averred, an American Goldsmith.

Irving's
place in
American
literature.

The most important date in our period after 1809, the year of the *Knickerbocker History*, is 1821, the year of *The Spy*. New writers emerged during the interim, but it was not until Cooper's romance won a brilliant success that those Americans who were not hopelessly colonial in mind recognised that they had another author of cosmopolitan fame worthy to set beside Irving. Like Irving, James Fenimore Cooper is counted as a Knickerbocker because, although born at Burlington, New Jersey, September 15, 1789, he was connected with the State of New York from his infancy. His father was an enterprising man who laid out the site of Cooperstown on Otsego Lake. There, amid pioneer surroundings such as he was des-

Cooper's
early years.

tined to describe in his romances, the boy passed his earliest years. In 1803 he entered Yale, having been prepared for college by an English clergyman at Albany, who seems to have filled his mind with prejudices never afterward eradicated. At Yale Cooper could not brook the confinement of classes and was finally dismissed.

This was a great pity, since his mind stood in much need of academic training; but readers of fiction have little reason to complain of the action of the faculty, since



COOPER'S RESIDENCE AT COOPERSTOWN, N. Y.

Cooper's dismissal probably led him to enter the navy and thus gave him the knowledge and experience without which he could not have written his great romances of sea life.

Cooper got his training for the sea as a sailor before the mast, and after that obtained a midshipman's commission. Then he saw three years of lake and ocean service of a somewhat exciting kind, since war with Great Britain was imminent; but suddenly he cut short his career by marrying into a family of Tory descent. His abandonment of the navy at such a juncture was deemed unpatriotic by many, but he cared little for such censure, his marriage having proved a very happy one. It seemed as if he would develop into a conservative and undistinguished country gentleman, when an accident turned the course

**Cooper finds
his vocation.**

of his life. He was reading one day a dull British novel and put it down with the remark to his wife that he be-



J Fenimore Cooper.

lieved he could write a better story himself. She dared him to try, and with her encouragement and that of friends he persevered in the task until his own tale of British life, *Precaution*, was written and published (1820). The book was a comparative failure and deserved its fate, for it was very dull and full of religious narrowness. It was, however, reprinted in England, and the fact that it passed as the work of an Englishman encour-

aged its author to think that it was worth while to make a second attempt.

His friends advised him to try this time to give his work an American setting, believing that he could deal better with materials that were familiar to

The Spy.

him. He listened to their advice, made use of a story about a spy that he had once heard John Jay tell, and the result was the historical romance that laid the foundations of its author's fame and is still regarded as one of the best wearing of American books. Curiously enough Cooper seems scarcely to have been aware that in creating Harvey Birch, the patriotic spy, he was

adding a character to fiction that would appeal profoundly to readers in every part of the world. He left the first volume set up in type for months before he could bring himself to write the second; and he had the last chapter set up with its pages numbered so that the publisher might be assured that the romance would not be too long. *The Spy* is not a work of art from which no page could be taken without loss, but while reading it we scarcely suspect that it was composed in such a mechanical fashion. Besides giving us a great central character, it furnishes interesting adventures as well, and although plainly a story of action written in the manner of Scott, it has enough originality of setting and individuality of handling to take from us all feeling of surprise that it should have been received favourably in England and enthusiastically in France. The latter country, indeed, has never ceased to honour the great romancer whom some Anglo-Saxons have been inclined of late to treat with undeserved condescension.

Cooper's next story was *The Pioneers* (1823), which described scenes and characters of frontier life familiar to him from boyhood. Its success convinced **The Leather-** him that writing fiction was his vocation, and **stocking** **Tales.** although the story is by no means one of his best, posterity is glad he wrote it, because it introduced to the world his finest character—one of the best in fiction—the hunter Natty Bumppo, better known as "Hawkeye," or "Leatherstocking." *The Pioneers*, although the first of the famous series in order of composition, is not the first in order of development. The opening story, as every one knows, is *The Deerslayer*, which was not published until 1841. Between these two romances came *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826)—generally considered

Cooper's finest work—*The Prairie* (1827), which closes the series and contains the noble death scene of the old trapper, and *The Pathfinder* (1840), which drew from the great French novelist, Balzac, enthusiastic praise.

Such a group of novels dealing almost like an epic with the prairies and forests of the New World would seem

**The Sea
Tales.**

a sufficient achievement for one man, but Cooper had not exhausted his resources.

The year that saw the beginning of *The Leatherstocking Tales* saw also the publication of *The Pilot*, the first and probably the best of the stories in which Cooper drew on his experiences as a sailor and made the ocean and life upon it important and novel elements in fiction. *The Pilot* not only brings in the redoubtable Paul Jones, but introduces its readers to Long Tom Coffin, one of Cooper's finest characters. Many other sea stories followed, the best being in all probability *The Red Rover* (1828), *The Two Admirals* (1842), and *Wing and Wing* (1842). Even in some of his poorer sea stories, such as *Afloat and Ashore* and *Jack Tier*, Cooper could not set his ships moving through the waves without being fairly interesting. Like most prolific novelists he had his ups and downs, and his worst was likely to be very bad indeed. This truth was impressed upon his readers early in his career, for *Lionel Lincoln*, a military story of the Revolution (1824), was a failure in spite of the pains he spent on it.

After his first successes Cooper was quite an important figure in the literary life of New York city, and when his

**Cooper in
Europe.**

success continued, he felt that he could afford to indulge his wish to spend some years abroad. He sailed in the summer of 1826

and did not return until the autumn of 1833. He was cordially received, but was indiscreet in the comments

he made upon European methods of government as well as in certain publications with regard to American politics and his country's general civilization. He seemed to think that as a great author it was his duty to set the world straight in every particular, and he succeeded only in setting his readers at odds with himself. He was engaged in numerous controversies, the romances he attempted on European themes were failures, and almost the only advantage he derived from his years of travel was the delight given him by the natural beauties of Italy, which are well described in *Wing and Wing*.

Nor did his return to America mend matters. He found the crude manners of his countrymen and the bustle of the Jacksonian epoch distasteful to him, and **Cooper and the American public.** he was imprudent enough to express his uncomplimentary opinions in a story entitled *Home as Found* (1838), which unluckily he forgot to make entertaining. He also got into trouble with some trespassers upon his property at Cooperstown and fared badly at the hands of the newspapers of the State. He was outrageously treated and deserved the verdicts he won in libel suits in which he was his own counsel. But while it is easy to sympathise with him, it is impossible to deny that his own temper and lack of discretion were in part responsible for the popular odium he incurred for many years. Nor was he able to lessen this odium by many successful stories; for, although he continued to be prolific to the last, he had somewhat exhausted his vein. Many of the novels of his later years would be considered as bad as any in our literature, if readers and critics knew enough about them to discuss them. Fortunately, however, public animosity against him decreased considerably before his death on September 14, 1851, and six

years previously he had published two good stories, *Satanstoe* and *The Chainbearer*.

A complete account of Cooper's fiction and his miscellaneous writings would be out of place, but something
Cooper's should be said about his merits and defects
merits and and about his rank in American literature.
defects.

His merits are those of a large-minded, wholesome writer of stories full of action and description, who is original in his characters and scenes although not in his methods of composition. He was a follower, not a copier of Scott, and displayed many of the powers and limitations of that greater genius. Like most large writers he is careless as to details, and while capable of writing well, he is often slipshod in his style and in the construction of his stories. To demand of him the virtues of the small, exquisite artist is to be unjust to him—it is to apply standards that fit neither him nor any other writers of his class. It must be admitted, however, that Cooper has faults that are peculiarly his own. Few novelists are responsible for a larger number of truly wretched books; few have failed so signally to give life to their women characters, or been in general such poor psychologists; few have been so inveterate in expressing their prejudices on all sorts of irrelevant subjects. Cooper used to insist on praising the Episcopal Church at the expense of other churches, on saying unpleasant things about New England and its inhabitants, on instituting unfavourable comparisons between the Bay of Naples and that of New York, and on lecturing his readers on table manners. What wonder that he made enemies during his life and that since his death he has alienated readers who have not been willing to make allowances for his failings?

But such allowances ought, it would seem, to be made

in favour of a writer who makes the past of our country live before our eyes, who gives life to prairie and forest, to Indian and trapper, to sailor and white-winged ship. When he is at his best, he becomes a genuine poet and dramatist—he seizes and holds the imagination of his reader. The winds of ocean or prairie seem to blow through his pages; large, kindly, natural men move through them; and Cooper himself appears strong, benignant, and sincere. For the pleasure of contact with such scenes, such characters, and such a wholesome writer, it seems worth while to condone his eccentricities. For the sake of American literature it seems worth while to assert that such a writer is one of its chief glories—an assertion which stands the excellent test of cosmopolitan approval. It is at least permissible to urge that Cooper's best stories are good reading not merely for boys, but for mature men, and that neglect and excessive censure of him are not only unjust but somewhat absurd.

Cooper and Irving have overshadowed all their rivals in fiction during the period covered by this

**Other writers
of fiction.**

chapter, but a few of these should be mentioned. The most talented was John Neal (1793–1876), a native of Maine, who led a varied life as merchant, lawyer, poet, novelist, editor, and social reformer. His poems and his numerous novels show traces of powers which, if cultivated, might have won him a lasting reputation. As it is, he is almost for-



John Neal

gotten; and when one examines such a chaotic romance as *Logan* (1822), one asks how such wild incoherence could have been written three years after the *Sketch-Book*. The



L. Maria Child.

answer probably is that Irving was too old and Neal just young enough to yield to the dominating influence of Byron. In complete contrast with Neal stand two exemplary New England ladies. One, Miss Catherine Maria Sedgwick (1789-1867), taught a school and wrote numerous novels and other books that were fairly interesting and admirably moral. The other, Mrs. Lydia Maria Child (1802-80), became widely known as a writer against slavery, but began with fiction of the historical type. Her best book is *Philothea* (1836), a story of Greek life during the time of Pericles.

It was not long before America could add a distinguished poet to her two distinguished prose writers.

**Bryant's
early years.**

Like Irving and Cooper, William Cullen Bryant is chiefly associated with New York, where he passed his mature life, but his formative years were spent in New England. He was born at Cummington, Massachusetts, November 3, 1794, and was brought up in the thrifty way characteristic of Puritan families, especially of such as lived in the country. A peculiar element was added to his education by his father, a physician with a love for poetry, who encouraged his children to read and write it. He actually had his son's juvenile satire on President Jefferson's financial

policy, entitled *The Embargo*, published in 1808—scarcely a discreet form of encouragement. Dr. Bryant was more happily inspired when he brought the boy home a copy of Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*. The lad had previously read not a little poetry of earlier types, including such morbid poems as Blair's "Grave," which had fostered in him a sober, moralizing tendency destined always to characterise him.



THE BRYANT HOMESTEAD AT CUMMINGTON,
MASS.

Now, with *The Lyrical Ballads*, a more wholesome and not less permanent poetic influence was added which, in conjunction with the influence exerted by his native hills and woods and streams, helped to make Bryant the chief poet of Nature in her American aspects.

Bryant did not secure much formal schooling, nor did he remain long at Williams College; but he continued to read, began the study of law, and before he was eighteen had written the first draft of what was to be his most famous poem, "Thanatopsis." In this strong, sombre performance tone, diction, rhythm, and substance of thought and feeling, while not entirely original, are sufficiently so to make the poem a very remarkable one for so young a poet. It should be remembered, however, that when "Thanatopsis" was published in that newly established Boston magazine, *The North American Review*, for September, 1817, it did not contain

either the opening or the concluding lines we read to-day, and that the great closing passage, with its noble verses about the "innumerable caravan," is probably the best-known thing Bryant ever wrote:

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

This passage did not appear until 1821 in a volume which contained "The Ages," a poem read at Harvard, "The Yellow Violet," "Green River" and other excellent pieces. This volume, published after Bryant's marriage and before he left the bar, gave clear proof that those critics had not been mistaken who had seen in "Thanatopsis," and in the strong, dignified stanzas "To a Waterfowl" (also published for the first time in *The North American Review*), clear proofs that a poet had come forward of far greater ability than any other yet produced by America. For the next two years Bryant, who was never a rapid or prolific writer, worked hard at his art and was rewarded by being able to add such good poems as "The Forest Hymn" and "The Lapse of Time" to the scanty list of his writings. Then, in 1825, he yielded to the advice of his friends, who wished him to devote himself entirely to literature and to remove to the most important city in the country, New York.

The magazine in which Bryant was interested soon

failed, but the friends he had made exerted themselves in his behalf, and in 1827 he obtained a temporary position on *The Evening Post*, which soon became permanent and very important. Bryant im-
Bryant as an editor. pressed his own strong moral tone upon the paper and made it the force in public affairs it has never ceased to be. He was not a brilliant editor, but he was an able and conscientious, if rather uncompromising one.



"CEDARMERE," BRYANT'S HOME AT
ROSLYN, L. I.

For twenty years, save only for some travelling in Europe, he devoted himself so unremittingly to the labours of his position that his poetry suffered both in quality and in quantity. Still, some good

and popular pieces, such as "The Song of Marion's Men" and "To a Fringed Gentian," belong to this period, as well as the collection of 1831, which, with an introduction by Irving, made his name known favourably in England. It is to this period also that we owe those memorable lines in "The Battle-field" (1837):

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;
 Th' eternal years of God are hers;
 But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
 And dies among his worshippers.

After 1845 Bryant gave himself some relaxation from his editorial labours, and as old age approached he be-

came more and more of a great national character. He was called upon to deliver memorial addresses and other public speeches, and his countrymen were as proud of the nobility of his character as of the high tone of his verse. And during this period of what are usually declining years, he showed himself to be a marked exception among poets by producing a considerable amount of important verse. The *Thirty Poems* of 1864 did not fulfil the promise given by "Thanatopsis," but they gave evidence of a growth in power over the work of Bryant's middle life, and this power was displayed almost to the day of his death. The patriotic "Oh, Mother of a Mighty Race," "Song of the Sower," "The Little People of the Snow," and the "Flood of Years" all belong to Bryant's later period. It is no wonder that when the American people learned that this aged, nobly inspired bard had died on June 12, 1878, from an accident received just after an address on the Italian patriot Mazzini, they should have been moved to grief at what they justly regarded as a great national loss.

As with Irving and Cooper, there has been of late a regrettable tendency to minimise the value of Bryant's writings. No one denies that he was a fine man or a very respectable Father of American Poetry; but his lack of warmth and variety and his other undoubted limitations have been emphasised without due insistence upon his many merits. He was inclined to dwell upon the solemn aspects of life, yet much of his verse is far from sombre, and he was comparatively free from both morbidness and sentimentality. He was the truest interpreter of Nature in verse that America has produced, and, while in this kind of poetry inferior to Wordsworth, was not a servile follower

Bryant's old age.

Bryant's achievements.

of that great poet. He was an inspiring poet of patriotism and human freedom. He foresaw the magnificent future unfolding before the States of our boundless West. But while an intense American and a student of contemporary affairs, as well as a prophet of his country's greatness, he was also, as a true patriot should be, a friend of his kind throughout the world and a lover of the storied past. He sang of the wheat-fields of the West, but he also wrote a good translation of Homer. And even as a technical artist in verse Bryant stands the rigorous tests of a later generation better than is often supposed; at least it is clear that no other American poet has written such good and individual blank verse as he wrote from early youth to extreme old age. He is not, strictly speaking, a great poet, neither is he a minor one. He is rather an important one, both because he is the true herald of other poets and because his poetry is in itself worthy of admiration. As a man and a citizen he is justly entitled to be termed great.

The contemporary American poets whom Bryant eclipsed were as formidable in numbers as they were in the main unsuccessful in performance. In **Other Knickerbock- 1829**, an anthology published in Boston by S. G. Goodrich, long known as "Peter Parley," a writer of children's books, contained specimens of no less than one hundred and twenty-five writers of verse who, if discussed, would naturally be treated in this chapter. Four-fifths of these are not known even by name to students of to-day, and of the remainder scarcely one is read save in limited selections. Such as are worthy of mention fall into four groups according as they are credited to New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, or the South. Of New York poets Robert C. Sands, a friend

of Bryant's, is the least remembered, and indeed his work as a writer of short tales was superior to his attempts in



John Howard Payne

verse, and the sprightly, energetic man was superior to the author. John Howard Payne (1792-1852), the dramatist, is remembered only for the song, "Home, Sweet Home" from his worthless opera, *Clari; or the Maid of Milan* (1823). Fitz-Greene Halleck (1790-1867) and Joseph Rodman Drake (1795-1820) are remembered as friends and as the authors

of a few poems of merit.

Halleck, a native of Guildford, Connecticut, came to New York city to make his way in business and there formed an inti-

Halleck and Drake. macy with Drake,

a young physi-

cian. The two attracted no-

tice by a series of squibs in

verse upon local politicians.

These appeared in *The Even-*

ing Post for 1819 and are

known as "The Croaker Pa-

pers." Years after Drake's

death his daughter published

a volume of his verse entitled

The Culprit Fay and Other

Poems (1835), of which the title poem won considerable

favour. It is still admired and may be fairly regarded



Fitz-Greene Halleck

as a creditable effort of the fancy in view of Drake's youth and of the condition of American poetry at the time he wrote. His song "The American Flag" has also proved popular with patriotic readers. Halleck was probably a better poet than his friend, although he did not, for all his length of years, leave behind him an impressive mass of good poetry. His best poem is his touching elegy on Drake, which is worth quoting entire:



J. Rodman Drake

ON THE DEATH OF JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE

Green be the turf above thee,
Friend of my better days!
None knew thee but to love thee,
Nor named thee but to praise.

Tears fell when thou wert dying
From eyes unused to weep,
And long, where thou art lying,
Will tears the cold turf steep.

When hearts, whose truth was proven;
Like thine, are laid in earth,
There should a wreath be woven
To tell the world their worth;

And I who wake each morrow
To clasp thy hand in mine,
Who shared thy joy and sorrow,
Whose weal and woe were thine;

It should be mine to braid it
 Around thy faded brow,
 But I've in vain essayed it,
 And feel I cannot now.

While memory bids me weep thee,
 Nor thoughts nor words are free,—
 The grief is fixed too deeply,
 That mourns a man like thee.

Halleck wrote other good lyrics, for example the spirited martial poem "Marco Bozzaris." He had also a capacity for social verse and for mild satire, and, although he was plainly influenced by Byron, he showed his own talents by influencing in his turn such writers as Willis and Saxe. Both he and Drake have been much overrated, but it is also quite possible to underrate them. Halleck, at least, had a genuine, though very small gift for poetry.

New England during the present period was preparing, as we shall see in the next chapter, for the great outburst of literary activity that marked the Transcendentalist Epoch, but it was doing very little in the way of producing good poetry.

**Poets of
Massachu-
setts.**

In Massachusetts Richard Henry Dana, Sr. (1787-1879), father of the author of that well-known narrative *Two Years Before the Mast*, was probably the most important literary influence. He wrote much for *The North American Review*, lectured on Shakespeare in the chief cities, and helped to stimulate a truer taste for literature. His creative work in prose and verse is less important, although his narrative poem "The Buccaneer" is not without merit. Associated with Dana is his brother-in-law, Washington Allston (1779-1843), the painter and the friend of Cole-

ridge. He was born in South Carolina, but spent little of his life there. In 1813, he published a volume of poems, several of which gave promise of better things than Allston was to perform. In comparison with the work of contemporary Americans, however, his early poems were marked by some attention to technique, and their influence may have been beneficial. A later poet, who attained a mild vogue, was Charles Sprague, who wrote elaborate odes and simple poems of sentiment. Far more romantic and gifted than any of these sober men of letters was Mrs. Maria Gowan Brooks, author of *Zóphiël; or the Bride of Seven*, a poem dealing with the love of spirits for women, a theme that had attracted Byron and Moore. Another English poet, Robert Southey, thought Mrs. Brooks "the most impassioned and imaginative of all poetesses." Modern criticism must discount this praise largely, but should acknowledge that a little less extravagance of romantic passion might have given Mrs. Brooks a creditable place among American poets.

Connecticut seemed seventy-five years ago to be highly honoured by being the birthplace of another poetess, Mrs.

Lydia Huntley Sigourney (1791-1865). She is now so little read that it is difficult to conceive how she could ever have obtained her popularity.

Verses on all sorts of subjects, especially domestic events such as weddings and funerals, poured from her



L. H. Sigourney

pen in a copious stream. She confessed that she composed while knitting, and one can well believe it. Her sentimentality suited the taste of the time and does not suit ours, although a few of her poems are still read. Much the same thing may be said of another Connecticut poet, James Gates Percival (1795-1856), a very learned and variously gifted man, who was regarded about the year 1820 as a most promising poetical genius. Percival took himself too seriously, however, and was too easily dominated by the influence of Byron and other poets; hence, while he occasionally wrote a good poem like the lines, "To Seneca Lake," the mass of his poetry soon failed either to hold old readers or to gain new ones. Another ambitious poet, also highly regarded at one time, even by such a good judge of poetry as Bryant, was James Abraham Hillhouse (1789-1841), whose main efforts were made in the field of dramatic poetry. His chief drama, *Hadad* (1825)—another attempt to treat the theme of a spirit's love for a mortal woman—contained some elevated passages, and, if its author had not sacrificed human interest and laboured too self-consciously, it might have been a work of lasting merit. An interesting man with a varied career as teacher, lawyer, merchant, clergyman, and reformer, was John Pierpont (1785-1866), who did not take himself as a writer so seriously as Percival and Hillhouse took themselves, and yet has left behind him fully as much readable poetry. His lines on his son's death, beginning "I cannot make him dead," still appeal to the hearts of those that read them.

Meanwhile literature was faring little better in the South than it had done just after the Revolution. Agriculture, law, and politics divided the interest of the aristocracy, and a serious devotion to literary composition was very

rare. Little prose was written and not much poetry of importance. Two Maryland poets, however, wrote lyrics that have not been forgotten. One was Francis Scott Key (1780-1843), who composed "The Star-Spangled Banner," on the occasion of the repulse of the British from Baltimore in 1814. The other was Edward Coate Pinkney (1802-28), son of the orator and diplomatist, William Pinkney, a young man of promise, cut off before he had emerged from the imitative stage, but not before he had written two love-songs of genuine beauty. Pinkney's "Serenade" and "A Health" seem destined to hold a permanent place in our anthologies and in our hearts.

Poets of the South.

Although we are naturally led to give our main attention to the development of poetry and fiction, we should not omit to notice permanently important works of information. Several such appeared in the period ending with Jackson's accession to the presidency, and the names of the authors may be recalled. Henry Wheaton began to write on international law, Henry R. Schoolcraft on ethnology, and Jared Sparks on history. Chancellor James Kent composed his *Commentaries on American Law*, and John James Audubon issued the prospectus of *The Birds of America*. Joseph E. Worcester commenced his work in lexicography, and George Ticknor laid the foundations of his scholarship. Daniel Webster and Edward Everett began their careers as orators. Even in the new West men were beginning to write and publish books and newspapers. Magazines and reviews sprang up all over the country. In other words, some of the newly developed American energy had been put at the service of literature. We may smile at the crudity of much of the product,

Miscellaneous writers.

but we should remember that the day of small things is needed to usher in the day of large things.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR CHAPTER V

A. For General and Special Works and Anthologies, see the Bibliography at the end of Chapter I.

B. **Helps for Further Study.**—There are numerous editions of Irving's complete works (Putnam). For further information about him, see his *Life and Letters*, edited by P. M. Irving (4 vols., 1862-64), and the biographical study by Charles Dudley Warner in the *American Men of Letters* (1881). For Cooper, whose novels may be obtained in many editions, but whose miscellaneous works have long been out of print, see the excellent biography by Prof. Thomas R. Lounsbury in the *American Men of Letters* (1883). For Neal see his *Wandering Recollections of a Somewhat Busy Life* (1869). For Mrs. Child, see an excellent essay by Thomas Wentworth Higginson in his volume entitled *Contemporaries* (1899). Bryant's works in verse and prose were edited by his son-in-law, Parke Godwin, in four volumes (1883-84), new edition of the poems, 1903. See also the biography by Godwin (2 vols., 1883) and the Life by John Bigelow in the *American Men of Letters* (1890), as well as General James Grant Wilson's *Bryant and his Friends* (1886). General Wilson has also edited the *Life and Letters* of Halleck and an edition of his poems (1869). For fuller information, see the bibliography in Trent.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS (1830-1850)

THE term "Transcendentalists" has a more or less definite meaning in modern philosophy, and in general applies to persons who adhere to the intuitional philosophy of Immanuel Kant and his followers. In popular usage, however, it is loosely applied to people of a mystical or subtly speculative turn of mind who do not base their thoughts and actions exclusively, or for the most part, on such facts, or assumed facts, of human experience as are susceptible in the main of concrete verification. In other words, Transcendentalists are usually looked upon by the average mortal as being queer and rather high-flying individuals, and such was long the popular conception of the leaders of the so-called Transcendentalist Movement in New England.

The origins of this movement are complex and difficult to set forth clearly and briefly. It must be sufficient to say that before the Revolution speculation on theological and philosophical matters had departed far from the orthodox lines within which it had been conducted by the early New England divines and their immediate successors. Even Jonathan Edwards himself, thorough Calvinist as he was, left behind him speculations which modern liberals have used in support of views which he would have denounced. The important religious revival known as The Great

Meaning of
the term.

Rise of New
England Uni-
tarianism.

Awakening had something to do with the loosening of the hold of Calvinistic orthodoxy, and the writings of English Deists and Arians were very influential upon clergymen, especially in eastern Massachusetts. By 1785 a Unitarian congregation had been established in Boston, and a more or less open breach had been made between the adherents of the new faith and the upholders of orthodox Congregationalism. This breach continued to widen until the Unitarians obtained the control of theological teaching in Harvard and the Congregationalists were compelled to found Andover Seminary for the training of their ministers. Churches and families were divided and bitter controversies arose. Before 1820 the Unitarians, who at first were not inclined to organise themselves as a separate Church, had been forced in self-defence to effect such an organization.

The new Church did not make many converts throughout the country, but for about thirty years its hold on

**Culmination
of the
Unitarian
movement.**

Boston and the surrounding region was very strong. Its leaders were not radical and were noted rather for their activity as philanthropists and good citizens than for their zeal as religious controversialists. But a Church that owed its existence to the spirit of speculation could not logically check speculation, nor could one that at least partly checked spiritual emotionalism prevent a reaction from such repression. Hence it came to pass that by 1830 many aspiring New Englanders brought up as Unitarians became dissatisfied with their religious inheritance on speculative or emotional grounds, and began to reach out for some less formal variety of faith. It is because many of the leading Transcendentalists like Emerson and Ripley were deserters from Unitarianism that a study of the his-

tory of that Church is necessary to an understanding of the Transcendental movement.

The most famous of the early Unitarians and a most important link between them and the Transcendentalists was William Ellery Channing, born in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1780, but associated with Boston, where he laboured as preacher and philanthropist from 1803 until his death in 1842. He

possessed an exquisitely sensitive nature, a fact which kept him hovering between a

rational and a mystical theology and determined his bent toward humanitarianism. For

many years, especially after death cut off in comparative

youth the brilliant preacher, Joseph Steevens Buckminster,

Channing by his sermons, essays, and treatises represented

the best Unitarian thought both in theology and in public

affairs. As a theologian, he censured the narrowness of

Calvinism, but accepted many supernatural features of Christianity that are rejected by later and more radical thinkers. In other words, he dealt with religion

as a part of life rather than as a domain of thought, and in this he was at one with the Transcendentalists and with many orthodox clergymen of recent times. He was

a courageous reformer who wrote against the evils of slavery and war, but he was conservative by nature and did not please extremists. This conservatism, combined with his lucidity of thought and style, gave Channing a



Wm E Channing

hold upon his contemporaries both at home and abroad which was even greater than that of the more brilliant Emerson; but it prevented him from attaining a hold upon the future at all comparable with that of Emerson. His writings, although not altogether neglected to-day, seem somewhat formal, old-fashioned, and lacking in profound appeal; but it would be well if some of his sermons and essays, like the eloquent "Remarks on the Writings and Character of John Milton," were more frequently read.

The general character of the New England people may be regarded as the soil in which the seeds of Transcendentalism were sown. That character is usually described as pious, thrifty, matter-of-fact, practical; yet The Great Awakening and other events in the history of New England prove that its people have always been capable of deep feeling and strong imagination. Unitarianism, as we have just seen, was in part a result of this emotionalism, in part a counter-acting influence to it. Another influence, destined to divert rather than to counteract New England emotionality, is to be found in the political isolation of the region. Aspiring American youths normally chose politics as the sphere in which to exercise their ambitions; but, after the disruption of the Federalist party, New England was on the whole in opposition, and political power found its centre elsewhere. A finely trained young New Englander, while he could dream of emulating the career of Webster, was nevertheless repelled by the thought of entering the arena of rough-and-ready politics dominated by the adherents of Andrew Jackson. Hence, reacting from formal Unitarianism and rejecting politics, many New Englanders after 1830 became enamoured of new phases of

**The New
England
character.**

philosophy and religion, welcomed recent English writers like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Carlyle, studied European literature, especially that of Germany, and last, but not least, became philanthropists and reformers, particularly in the anti-slavery cause.

The seeds which, sown in the New England character, produced what is called the Transcendental movement,

The seeds of Transcendentalism. have just been briefly described. They were chiefly derived from Germany, not so much

through direct study of men like Kant, Schleiermacher, and Goethe, although these were studied by a few New Englanders, as from the writings of Coleridge and Carlyle, who had themselves been powerfully influenced by German thought. Nor were the influences that made Transcendentalists out of New Englanders so much those of strict philosophy as those of the new literature which in England and Europe had followed the French Revolution—a literature of liberal and romantic aspirations. There were Transcendentalists of a philosophical turn like Bronson Alcott, but most of the leaders of the movement in New England were either literary men or else social reformers—the last-named class deriving considerable inspiration from the writings of the French Socialist, Fourier.

The only organization of the movement was a rather informal one. On September 19, 1836, Emerson, Alcott,

The Transcendental Club. the Rev. James Freeman Clarke, the Rev. Frederick Henry Hedge, and Prof. Convers Francis met at the home of the Rev. George Ripley

as a group of men addicted to philosophical discussion. This was the origin of what was known as the Transcendental Club or Hedge's Club, the latter name having been given to it because a gathering would be held whenever

Hedge came from Maine on a visit to Boston. Later the club took in Margaret Fuller; the able controversialist, Orestes A. Brownson; the noted liberal preacher, Theodore Parker; and one or two other members. Little came from the group for a few years save an occasional book or pamphlet; then certain of its members engaged in two interesting enterprises, the founding of Brook Farm and of *The Dial*. A few years later the club found itself scattered, the movement having spent its force. Some of the Transcendentalists had abandoned speculation for practical work as reformers; others had taken up journalism; one member, Brownson, had become a staunch supporter of Catholicism; another had died. It was just as well that the Club was so little of a proselytizing organization, for individual genius was thus given the freest vent and American literature and life profited from the unfettered services of noble souls. But this practical lack of organization and of definite purposes and methods of work makes it very difficult to say precisely what American Transcendentalism was or what it accomplished.

Probably the best-known feature of the Transcendentalist movement is the founding of Brook Farm. This is due partly to the fact that a great amount of
Founding of Brook Farm. ridicule was poured upon the experiment, partly to Hawthorne's having joined the community and described it in *The Blithedale Romance*. For many persons the word "Transcendentalism" calls up the idea of men and women talking philosophy while ploughing and milking. But Brook Farm, although a failure, was not an entirely foolish one. It was an association designed to simplify life and dignify labour, and, while it lasted, it fulfilled its purposes. Its founder was George Ripley (1802-80), a student of German philos-

ophy, which he introduced to Americans by means of valuable translations. Becoming interested in social reform, he abandoned the Unitarian ministry and, in 1841, succeeded in inducing a small number of persons to join him in incorporating the "Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education." A farm was purchased at West Roxbury, not far from Boston, and for a while things went well, particularly with the school. Some of the leading Transcendentalists held aloof and the general public was greatly amused, but those chiefly concerned were fairly satisfied.



Geo. Ripley

In a few years, however, the subsidiary trades undertaken needed more capital than was available, and a rather rash acceptance of Fourier's ideas led to the building of a large "phalanstery" or communal house, which was burned before it had been entirely completed or at all insured. This loss set the Brook Farmers adrift. Ripley made himself a good reviewer and encyclopedist; his brother-in-law, Charles A. Dana, became the well-known editor of the *New York Sun*; one of the pupils of the school, George William Curtis, was afterwards famous as an orator and essayist. As years went by the survivors tended more and more to view their experiment through the halo of sentiment and romance. We of a more practical age, in which co-operation is being practised on a larger scale, need not attempt to dissipate this halo.

A less practical man than Ripley also attempted to found an ideal community, which came to a still more disastrous end than Brook Farm. This was
Bronson
Alcott as Amos Bronson Alcott (1799-1888), generally
teacher. regarded as the most thorough-going visionary of the Transcendentalist group. He was a Connecticut farmer's boy, who educated himself mainly by private reading and by seeing something of the world as a peddler in the South. Having failed at peddling, he turned school-teacher in a Connecticut village, but was soon dismissed on account of his educational reforms, which had too much novelty and merit to prove at first acceptable. For the next ten years he laboured as a teacher at various places, and at last in his school at the Masonic Temple in Boston he seemed to have succeeded in founding a model institution. But in a few years he was again an object of popular suspicion and forced to "move on." He had, indeed, shown himself to be too radical in some educational matters and had outdone his Transcendentalist friends in some of his vagaries; yet it is difficult to refrain from thinking that Boston showed illiberality with regard to him. Emerson, whose neighbour he now became at Concord, stood by him, however, and the two men developed a beautiful friendship, the more famous writer always defending the genius of the misunderstood philosopher, who, in pedagogical matters at least, had shown himself to be much wiser than those who laughed at him.

Friendly capital enabled Alcott to start his misnamed community at "Fruitlands," where he forbade the use
Alcott as
sage. of manure and would not have the canker-worms destroyed. He was obviously not fit for this world on the practical side, and he continued for the rest of his long life to write "Orphic

Sayings," which plain people could not comprehend, and journals, which he called "Scriptures." He also gave "conversations" on abstruse philosophical topics, which made persons not versed in Neo-Platonic mysteries rub their eyes with astonishment. His family had a hard struggle to subsist until his gifted daughter, Louisa May Alcott (1832-88) grew up to describe in *Little Women* (1867) and other popular books the queer but charming life led in a Transcendentalist home. Along with the money earned by the daughter came a kind of sunset glow of fame for the father. His lectures were better attended, his books were a little more read—for they had become more intelligible—and adherents of his philosophy hailed him as their master at a Summer School of Philosophy founded in Concord in 1879. This fame



L. M. Alcott

can scarcely be said to be growing, for although Alcott had more merit as a writer than some critics are disposed to admit, he was certainly as a rule lacking in clearness and coherence of thought, and he dealt with subjects on which it is easy to be misunderstood when one is right and far easier to be nebulous than either plainly right or plainly wrong. Yet although Alcott can never be a popular author, and although his claims to greatness are sure to be denied by many, he is worthy of remembrance as a striking figure in an important generation and as an unselfish seeker after truth.

The services to American culture of the woman who,

like Alcott, was long regarded as embodying most of the extravagances of Transcendentalism, appear now to be

**Margaret
Fuller.**

slowly attaining proper recognition, although they cannot be said to be yet widely appreciated. Sarah Margaret Fuller, who is known only by the second of her Christian names, was born in Cambridgeport, Massachusetts, May 23, 1810. Her edu-



S. M. Fuller.

cation was forced and her childhood rendered morbid by a father over-zealous for her distinction. After his death in 1835, she developed on the humane side of her character and became a stay of her family. She taught school for a while under Alcott in Boston and then in Providence, but was glad to exchange this work for the pleasanter task

of conducting "conversations" with cultivated Boston women. There is little doubt that she often dealt with topics that were too deep for her; but the Transcendentalists with whom she associated did not shrink from allowing feelings to take the place of knowledge, and it is quite certain that Miss Fuller felt intensely about a large number of things and expressed her feelings eloquently.

She soon had a chance to do more permanent work. The Transcendental Club had often discussed the worthlessness of most contemporary American literature and the need of a journal to serve as an organ of the new thought. Sundry magazines in which they discovered promise failed to do the service

The Dial.

required, and at last they launched one of their own, with Margaret Fuller as editor. It was entitled *The Dial*, in accordance with a suggestion of Alcott's, and the first number, a fairly thick octavo, bore the date of July, 1840. It lived two years under Margaret Fuller and two more under Emerson, the leading Transcendentalists contributing to it with fidelity, if not with zeal. It gained a few warm friends both in America and in England, but exchange editors laughed at it, especially when an instalment of Alcott's enigmatic "Orphic Sayings" appeared, and the general public was apathetic. The magazine was, in fact, not nearly so good as its promoters intended to make it, nor even so good as they thought it; it was probably much less influential upon the course of American literature than recent sympathetic critics have believed. But it was far from a failure. The poetry showed a fresh spirit and was decidedly above the ordinary in merit; Emerson, Theodore Parker, and Margaret Fuller contributed some of their best essays; there were papers dealing with music, art, and foreign literature; and, last but not least, a stimulating outlet was offered to the genius of Thoreau.

When she gave up the editorship of *The Dial*, Margaret Fuller entered the most important stage of her career.

Margaret Fuller's later career. In the summer of 1843, she widened her vision by travelling in Illinois and Wisconsin, her travels furnishing her with materials for a small volume, *Summer on the Lakes* (1844). Late in 1844, she removed to New York, where she became literary critic of *The Tribune* and for a time an inmate of the house of its famous editor, Horace Greeley. Here she did excellent journalistic work of all sorts and also had an element of romance introduced into her life, as her re-

cently published *Love Letters* show. In 1846, she was enabled to accomplish her long-deferred plan of visiting Europe, the home of so much of the culture that her mind and heart craved. Travel broadened her in every way, with the result that her letters make interesting reading. She formed a friendship with Mazzini and spent the years 1847 to 1850 in Italy, which was then in a state of revolution. She sympathized deeply with the Italian patriots, all the more so because she had been secretly married to one of them, Giovanni Angelo, Marquis Ossoli. After the failure of the Roman Revolution, she determined to return to America with her husband and their infant son. But on July 19, 1850, the vessel on which they were passengers was wrecked on Fire Island, and the Ossolis went down in sight of the land on which their hopes were centred.

Thus perished one of the most brilliant of American women. She had written nothing of high importance,

**Her rank as
a writer.**

but in her *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1844) and her *Papers on Literature and Art* (1846), especially in the latter, she had given plain evidence both of her nobility of soul and of her critical capacity. Her letters from abroad had shown that she was growing mentally and spiritually and that her future was full of promise. It is no wonder that her friends thought her worthy of a memoir in three volumes. Posterity cannot give her so much attention, but no one interested in American literature should forget her fine character, her pathetic death, or the fact that she ranks with Poe as the best American critic before Lowell.

One of Margaret Fuller's biographers and the most stimulating and influential of her friends was the man

who is now generally regarded as the greatest of the Transcendentalist group, Ralph Waldo Emerson. He was born in Boston, May 25, 1803, of excellent New England stock. His father dying early, the education of the boy and of his brilliant brothers, who did not live to fulfil their promise, devolved upon a good mother and a high-minded aunt. Emerson himself seemed likely to go into a decline, but a visit to the South after his graduation at Harvard averted the disease. At college he had seemed a rather subdued boy, and though he had done some unusual reading and written not unusual verse, he had certainly not made a brilliant showing, although the teaching of the young scholars Ticknor and Everett, fresh from Germany, had doubtless impressed him. There was little about him to make an observer believe that he would ever be looked up to as a leader by enthusiasts and visionaries. Yet even then he was an idealist and a reader of Plato.

All this did not argue well for his success in the Unitarian ministry to which he was called after a short period of school teaching. Three years, during which he was advanced from associate to full pastor, sufficed to show him that he had mistaken his calling. Theological scruples were the occasion of his preaching his notable farewell sermon in 1832, but the main reason probably lay in the recesses of a nature that shunned hard and fast thinking and cramping formulas of belief, as well as organised activities and aggressive human contact. Emerson was a man born to go his own gait, as the saying is; but he was too subtle and gentle to be a violent propagandist of his own views. He broke with Unitarianism quietly, all the more quietly

**Emerson's
youth.**

**Emerson as
preacher.**

because his wife died about the same time, and shortly after, somewhat low in health and spirits, he sought the benefits of foreign travel.

Europe did not inspire the self-centred Emerson as it had done Irving and Cooper and Longfellow; but he met

The lecturer. Carlyle and formed with him one of the most

beautiful of recorded friendships. Shortly after his return in the fall of 1833 he settled in Concord, which was to be his permanent home. He had a small



EMERSON'S HOME AT CONCORD, MASS.

fixed income which he supplemented by lecturing, and he was thus enabled to lead a quiet happy life with his second wife and the children she gave

him. At first he lectured mainly on scientific subjects, but gradually manners and morals, the true themes for such a compound of the poet and the philosopher, gained the upper hand, and his reputation as a lecturer steadily increased. What his style of lecturing was and what inspiration he gave to young men when at the height of his powers, may be best understood from the glowing pages of Lowell's essay.¹

It was not until 1836, however, that Emerson gave persons out of the reach of his voice an opportunity to test his genius and the validity of the message he had

¹ "Emerson the Lecturer" in *My Study Windows* and in Vol. I of *Lowell's Prose Works*.

for mankind. In that year, at the age of thirty-three, he published his small volume entitled *Nature*, which was such a Transcendental rhapsody that it bewildered most

of its first readers. It is now considered by
The sage and poet. many of his admirers to contain some of his most eloquent prose and to have much of the power and charm of noble poetry. In the same year he wrote his fine patriotic hymn for the anniversary of the Battle of Concord, and then, as though to prove that international animosities were smothered and that the individual as well as the state has high claims upon us, he edited Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* and two years later his friend's *Miscellanies*, incurring no little personal labour and financial loss. By this time he was the centre of the Transcendental movement—the chosen friend of Alcott, Margaret Fuller, and Thoreau, and the mentor of hundreds of others through lectures, letters, and personal intercourse. He was with these aspiring men and women, but he was not altogether of them, for he was more clear-sighted and subtle than they, and kept aloof from controversies and rash experiments.

In 1841, with the first series of his now famous *Essays*, and in 1844, with the second, Emerson revealed himself

more plainly than he had done before, in
The ethical essayist. his true capacity of ethical stimulator. He appealed to men and women not deadened

by age and routine life to the promptings of the spirit that incites to plain living and high thinking. Moral utterances of precisely such tonic qualities were practically unknown to modern literature. To find a parallel to Emerson the stimulator we must go back to Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus. He was still to write much valuable prose and some notable verse; yet it seems scarcely

far from the truth to say that with the appearance of the second series of his *Essays* he had accomplished his main work, although he had, of course, by no means achieved the full scope and intensity of his noble influence, which has grown steadily since the delivery in 1837 of his celebrated Phi Beta Kappa address on "The American Scholar."

It was not until 1847 that Emerson collected his poems and gave his countrymen a good opportunity to judge of that phase of his work. Toward the end of his life he published more poetry and revised his former work in verse, but in mass it remained comparatively small. In stimulative and suggestive qualities it was rich, nor is it rare to find persons who consider Emerson the greatest of American poets. This claim is denied by those critics and readers who believe that a poetic form is as necessary to a true poem as spirit and substance of a highly poetic order. Emerson was careless of form; for example, he used eight-syllable verses far too frequently and was often slipshod in the construction of these. But he made up for this defect by deep thought, moral elevation, and consummate phrasing. A few of his poems such as "Rhodora" are practically perfect wholes, and the number of admirable passages and lines, such as

**Emerson's
poetry.**

He builded better than he knew;
The conscious stone to beauty grew,

is fairly large. Still, Emerson has never been a truly popular poet, and the limited quantity of his verse, together with its defects of quality, seem to preclude his being reckoned a great one. That he is an important one can scarcely be a matter of question; that he is practically un-

rivalled in his stimulating suggestiveness is clear from such a poem as that which follows:

DAYS

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.
I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

In 1848, Emerson visited England for the second time and delivered some good lectures, among others the series issued in 1850 under the title of *Representative Men*. The interesting book in which he summed up his impressions of the mother country, *English Traits*, did not appear until 1856. A list of his later books is scarcely needed, but we should not forget to name *The Conduct of Life*, which was published in 1860. The first edition of this was sold in two days, a clear proof of his great influence, which made itself felt even in those troublous times. After the civil war he continued to lecture and write, occasionally producing something worthy of his prime; but, on the whole, his old age was a period of declining powers. In 1872, his house was burned and friends made him a generous gift which enabled him to take a third journey abroad. He returned to sink slowly and with pathetic dignity and grace until his death on April 27, 1882.

Emerson's
later
career.

Although every one agrees that Emerson was the greatest of the Transcendentalists and that he ranks among the greatest and most original of American writers, there is no unanimity as to the value of this or that portion of his work, nor are critics at one in the point of view from which they judge his writings. Some persons emphasise the philosophic element in his genius and treat him almost as if he were a formal philosopher, like Kant. Others lay stress upon the poetical element and rate him highly as a poet and a prose writer with a truly poetic appeal. Others see in him chiefly a great moralist or ethical writer, like Marcus Aurelius. Still others treat him as a great author or man of letters notable in all the phases of his activity.

It is too early yet to decide between these more or less conflicting views, but it should be pointed out that, while there are devoted Emersonians to whom every word of the master is sacred, there are also many readers who are comparatively cold to him, and that this fact may militate against the final acceptance of the view that he is a great man of letters in the widest sense of the phrase. The fact, generally admitted save by a few thorough-going admirers, that his essays and papers are deficient in logical structure, that a sentence often has little obvious connection with those that precede and follow it, may also affect his chances of ranking as a great author with an altogether adequate style and uniformly valuable substance of thought. Some of the difficulties that confront those who would gladly regard him as a great poet have been already mentioned. There are probably fully as many reasons that make against considering him, not as a great man

with a philosophical cast of mind, but as a great formal philosopher or systematic thinker on the problems of existence.

No such reasons prevail against the view that he is one of the greatest moralists or writers upon human relations

that the world has ever known; and, should
His rank as men continue to differ upon the other points
a moralist.

just outlined, it is possible that they may unite to admire Emerson chiefly in his capacity as a moralist. This need not involve depreciation of his achievements on other lines, and these must of necessity add to our conception of his general greatness. Nor does it seem possible that critics and readers of the future will fail to appreciate the noble and ideal qualities of Emerson the man, or that his place in American literature will ever be below the first rank of our writers, unless we are fortunate enough to produce authors worthy to vie with the supreme classics of the world, with Homer and Dante, and Shakespeare and Milton.

Of the numerous writers connected with the Transcendental movement

Thoreau's in New England
early years.

none has so steadily grown in fame as Henry David Thoreau, the poet-naturalist. He was younger than any of the leaders and he died earlier than most of them, in-

deed before he had established his reputation. If his fame had not grown, it is likely that the little he accomplished would have been forgotten, since small rep-



Henry D. Thoreau.

utations rarely become really permanent. He was born in Concord, Massachusetts, July 12, 1817, and died there May 6, 1862. He was of mingled French and Scotch descent—a fact which partly explains his eccentricities—and of a family not well endowed with property, but characterised by refinement and wholesome ideals. He graduated from Harvard in 1837 without having had a distinguished record, did some school-teaching, made an early appearance as a lecturer before the Concord Lyceum, and soon settled upon the plan of life best suited to his genius.

This plan was a simple one. He followed the family trade of pencil-making or else engaged in surveying and kindred occupations just to a sufficient extent to supply him with the necessities of life.

His plan of life. The rest of his time he gave to reading, reflection, and excursions which enabled him to study minutely the natural features of the country about Concord and of a few other regions that interested him. He took notes of what he saw and expanded these into journals out of which he made up his lectures, essays, and books, and from which his friends have extracted several posthumous volumes. Shortly after leaving college he made a friend of Emerson and resided some time in the latter's home. Such a friendship naturally caused a certain Emersonian influence to be observable in Thoreau's writings, although the amount of this has probably been exaggerated. In 1843, Thoreau served for a short time as tutor in the family of William Emerson on Staten Island, but his proximity to New York did not increase his love of cities, although it probably led him to make not very strenuous efforts to contribute to magazines and become known as a writer. In 1844, he made pencils

in his father's shop; the next year he took a step which was destined to make a greater impression than anything else he ever did.

He built a little cabin on the shores of Walden Pond, near Concord, and lived there alone, studying nature and communing with his own thoughts for a period covering about two years and a half.

**The Walden
experiment.**

During this period, which was not altogether unbroken by absences, he revised his first book, an account of a delightful river journey, bearing the title *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers* (1849). This volume, although it contains admirable descriptions, stimulating and original reflections, and some of the most charming prose ever written by an American, was a financial failure and has not, even since Thoreau's rise in fame, rivalled in popularity his second book, *Walden; or Life in the Woods* (1854), an account of his life in his cabin.

There is little to be chronicled after the publication of the latter book, which has become a classic among works of its kind. Thoreau made journeys to Cape

**Thoreau's
later career.**

Cod and Maine and Canada; he wrote and lectured; he took some interest in human affairs when John Brown was executed; but on the whole he remained what he had always been, a singularly self-centred thinker and observer and writer, moving in a narrow circle so far as concerned his bodily activities, but wandering in mind and spirit through infinite spaces of thought and feeling. He did eccentric things, as when, acting on his principle of opposition to organised society, he refused to pay taxes and suffered imprisonment in consequence. He doubtless presented a ridiculous appearance when making a bee-line for a hill with the umbrella

which was his constant companion stuck out behind him. But one should banish immediately the idea that he was misanthropical or mentally unbalanced. The cheerful courage with which he bore the confinement that preceded his death from consumption and many other features of his life bear testimony to the fact that he was essentially a sound man in thought and word and deed.

Although his observations as a naturalist form the basis of much of Thoreau's literary work, it is plain that he was far from being exclusively a student of nature. He not only wrote a certain amount of fairly good poetry in his youth, but he read the best poets, especially those of Greece, and he viewed the natural features of his beloved Concord region with the eyes of a poet. Hence, as the companion of many of his excursions, himself a poet, William Ellery Channing, a nephew of the great clergyman, felicitously phrased it, Thoreau was truly a poet-naturalist. Closer observers than he have discovered errors in his observations, but they would find it more difficult to detect, given the character of the man, false notes in his feelings or inconsequences in his thoughts.

This seems to suggest that Thoreau is best appreciated when he is viewed chiefly in his capacity as a writer or a man of letters. If one takes his books on Cape Cod and Canada as guide-books, one commits a ludicrous mistake. But does not one commit just as ludicrous a mistake when one imitates Lowell and other critics in seriously arguing against Thoreau's anti-social philosophy and in counselling people not to live like hermits on the sides of ponds or to leave

The poet-naturalist.

How to approach Thoreau.

their taxes unpaid? There is no danger that Thoreau will be much imitated in his eccentricities, and, if we shun him on account of them, we not only miss the charm of hundreds of pages of admirable English prose, but the moral and spiritual benefits that flow from a perusal of his reflections on friendship, on leading lives devoid of principle, on Greek poets, or on the sights and sounds of nature. In other words, Thoreau is likely to yield us most pleasure and profit if we approach him, not to gain solid information from him, not to sympathise with or combat his views on society, religion, and other great subjects, but to be partly charmed, partly instructed by him as we are by any other great essayist.

For this is at bottom what Thoreau is. He may begin to describe a river journey, but before we know it he is resting on his oars and discoursing on Greek poetry. Such departures from the logical and formal order of construction, such drawing upon treasures of reading and experience, such infusion of personal power and charm, are the essence of the form of composition to which we give the name "essay," and Thoreau is as much an essayist in what he wrote as a book, the inimitable *Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers*, as in such papers as "Walking" and "The Succession of Forest Trees," which are essays on their face. To call him an essayist does not prevent us, of course, from applying other names to him. We have seen that he is a poet-naturalist. He is a Transcendentalist, not only through his association with Emerson and other members of the group, but by virtue of his idealism and excessive individualism. He is as true a moralist as Emerson, and although he makes a less broad and elevated appeal and is less stimulating—no one would think

of ranking Thoreau with Marcus Aurelius—he seems to some persons to be more radical, more individual, and less likely to mislead than his more famous friend. But there is no need of endeavouring to sum up all the capacities in which a writer like Thoreau may exert his genius, and even if one could exhaust the list, the writer and man uniting those capacities would remain a mystery after all analysis. It seems best then merely to say that Thoreau was a prose writer of remarkable variety, power, and charm, whose fame has been steadily growing, and in whose works sympathetic readers find much to delight and profit them.

There were many other writers connected with the Transcendental movement in New England, most of whom must be omitted here. Four seem, however, to deserve special, though brief, mention. Three were poets, each endowed with a slight special gift, but none of them a sufficiently strong and original singer to make the large public pause to listen to him. The first of these poets is Jones Very (1813–80), a Unitarian clergyman so mystical as to occasion suspicion of his sanity, who wrote sonnets in the Shakespearian form that by their depth and sincerity have won a few warm admirers. The second is Christopher Pearse Cranch (1813–92), a painter who translated the *Æneid* and wrote several volumes of verse, but is best known for two or three short poems, especially for one entitled “Gnosis,” which contains this stanza:

**Very and
Cranch.**

Thought is deeper than all speech,
Feeling deeper than all thought;
Souls to souls can never teach
What unto themselves was taught.

The third poet is the friend of Thoreau just mentioned, William Ellery Channing the younger (1818-1901), who, besides a memoir of Thoreau and other prose, wrote several volumes of verse which, while treated by contemporaries like Poe with contempt and long neglected by the public, contained several fine lyrics like the "Hymn of the Earth," and enough good poetry to justify the recent appearance of a volume of selections. Channing, who survived nearly all his group, spent the latter part of his life as a complete recluse.

**The younger
Channing.**

The fourth and last writer to be mentioned here is the Rev. Sylvester Judd (1813-53), a native of Massachusetts, who was for some years a Unitarian clergyman in Maine. All his writings save the Transcendental romance *Margaret* (1845) have long been forgotten. *Margaret* is still read and admired by some persons, chiefly New Englanders, for its descriptions of natural scenery and of humble life. That these are features present in the book and that they are meritorious is not to be denied; but the construction of the romance is so chaotic that the general public is scarcely to be blamed for not accepting it as a masterpiece. Yet, after all, in being chaotic it more or less truly represented the epoch in which it was written and the movement of which its author was a small part.

**Sylvester
Judd.**

But although Transcendentalists, as these concluding paragraphs prove, were likely to be erratic in their lives as well as in their art, no one capable of appreciating sincerity and high aspirations will care to play the part of a severe censurer of them or their works. It seems better to part with them by applying to them by way of epitaph these noble lines, which may

Conclusion.

also serve as an example of what the younger Channing could achieve when truly inspired:

Life's wind speeds on, but we are bound
By memory to our quiet state,
And sleep in solitude profound,
Within the caverns of our fate.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR CHAPTER VI

A. For General and Special Works and Anthologies, see the Bibliography at the end of Chapter I.

B. **Helps for Further Study.**—From the large mass of literature relating to Unitarianism and Transcendentalism the following books may be selected as of special importance: Williston Walker's *Ten New England Leaders* (1901); Rev. A. P. Peabody's chapter on "The Unitarians of Boston" in Winsor's *Memorial History of Boston*, Vol. III (1880-81); George Willis Cooke's *Unitarianism in America* (1902); James Freeman Clarke's *Autobiography*, edited by Edward Everett Hale (1891); Octavius Brooks Frothingham's *Transcendentalism in New England* (1876) and his life of George Ripley in the *American Men of Letters* series (1882); Lindsay Swift's *Brook Farm* (1900), and Thomas Wentworth Higginson's *Old Cambridge* (1900). For William E. Channing, the elder, see his works in one volume (1886) and biographies by W. H. Channing (3 vols., 1848; 1 vol., 1880) and John White Chadwick (1903). For Alcott see the *Memoir* by Frank B. Sanborn and William T. Harris (2 vols., 1893). For Theodore Parker see the biography by John White Chadwick (1900). For Margaret Fuller see her biography by Emerson, James Freeman Clarke, and W. H. Channing (3 vols., 1852) and that by Thomas Wentworth Higginson in the *American Men of Letters* (1884). Her *Love Letters* were published in 1903; her earlier works are not easily obtained. *The Dial* has been reprinted by the Rowfant Club of Chicago (1902). For Emerson see the biographies by J. E. Cabot (2 vols., 1887), by Oliver Wendell Holmes (*American Men of Letters*, 1884), and by Richard Garnett (*Great Writers*, 1888).

The standard editions of Emerson's writings are the *Riverside* (12 vols.) and the *Centennary* (1903-1904). His correspondence with Carlyle was edited by Charles Eliot Norton in 2 vols. (1883). For Thoreau see biographies and studies by W. E. Channing, the younger (1873, 1902), by A. H. Japp (1877), by F. B. Sanborn (*American Men of Letters*, 1882), and by H. S. Salt (*Great Writers*, 1896). His works, including his letters, are published in the *Riverside* edition in eleven volumes. His *Essay on Service* was edited by F. B. Sanborn in 1902; the same editor published in the same year a volume of selected poems of the younger W. E. Channing. Jones Very's essays and verses were published complete in 1886, with a sketch by James Freeman Clarke. A useful anthology, *The Poets of Transcendentalism*, was edited in 1903 by George Willis Cooke. For further details see Trent, Chapters XII and XIII, and Bibliography, pp. 589-590.

CHAPTER VII

THE ROMANCERS (1830-1850)

WHILE it is doubtless only proper to emphasise the important effects upon both the life and the literature of America produced between 1830 and the opening of the civil war by the Transcendental movement in New England, it is necessary to remember that the rest of America was living its own life, social, political, and literary, and that there and even in New England distinguished authors were leading their respective careers without paying overmuch attention to what the Transcendentalist seers were saying and doing. We have already seen that Irving and Cooper laid the main foundations of American fiction before 1830, and that after that date they continued to write their books and extend their influence. Irving's success with the short story certainly encouraged the production of that form of fiction in which Hawthorne and Poe obtained such success, and these masters may also have owed something to Irving's use of the supernatural and the grotesque. But, as might have been expected, it was Cooper's success rather than Irving's that most influenced American writers of fiction prior to the civil war.

Many of these romancers were forgotten long ago and such as are still occasionally read now seem to be prolix, careless, sentimental, old-fashioned. As a matter of fact,

not a single romance of a high order of merit was produced by any American save Cooper until 1850, when Hawthorne published *The Scarlet Letter*. But the entire work of Poe in fiction was accomplished between the dates chosen as limits to this chapter, Hawthorne wrote his short stories and his greatest romance, and Bird, Kennedy, Simms, and Melville wrote books worthy of remembrance. Between 1850 and the end of the civil war both American fiction and American poetry showed changes which seem to warrant treating the creative writers of this shorter period in a separate chapter. Furthermore, covering both divisions of the period between Jackson and Lincoln, a group of writers may be distinguished who used fiction and poetry mainly for humorous purposes, and who thus demand treatment apart from the main romancers and poets whose work we shall now consider.

If such matters could be decided by a popular vote, it could be demonstrated that Nathaniel Hawthorne is the greatest writer of fiction, if not the greatest writer of any kind that America has yet produced. He was born of typical New England stock on July 4, 1804, in the then somewhat important seaport of Salem, Massachusetts. His father, a sea-captain, died four years later in Surinam, the widowed mother became a recluse, and Hawthorne with two sisters led a life that developed rather than checked the family traits of reserve and introspection. Still, he appears to have been an exceptionally imaginative rather than a morbid boy, and he had the good fortune when fourteen to pass a year in then sparsely settled Maine, where his physique was doubtless strengthened and his mind broadened. He returned to Maine two years later

**Early
romancers.**

**Hawthorne's
early years.**

to enter Bowdoin College, where he graduated, having had Longfellow and Franklin Pierce, afterward President of the United States, for college mates. Then, in 1825, he went back to Salem, where he spent twelve years as a secluded writer, developing sombre thoughts and fancies which he committed to pages that found no ready market with the publishers.

In 1828, he succeeded in getting printed an anonymous romance entitled *Fanshawe*—a not very promising story of strange doings at a country college, obviously Bowdoin. Then he turned to short stories and in 1830 secured an entrance

First literary work.

into *The Token*, one of the then fashionable miscellanies entitled annuals, published by Goodrich, of "Peter Parley" fame. Hawthorne himself compiled a universal history under this *nom de plume* and wrote stories for Goodrich which slowly gained readers. By 1836 he was contributing to leading magazines like *The Knickerbocker* of New York—established in 1833 by Charles Fenno Hoffman, a romancer and minor poet—and in 1837, with the secret aid of an enthusiastic friend and college mate, Horatio Bridge, he gathered some of the best of his stories into the first series of his *Twice-told Tales*. These so increased his reputation that editors sought for his work. His friends also managed in 1839 to get him into the Boston Custom-house under George Bancroft, the historian, and about the same time he looked forward to marrying, when her health should permit, a charming young invalid, Miss Sophia Peabody, a member of a talented family.

In two years the Democratic party, to which Hawthorne belonged, went out of power and he lost his incongruous position. Then he joined the Brook Farm community, but found that sort of life not to his liking. On his with-

drawal he was married to Miss Peabody and took up his residence with her in the Old Manse at Concord, made famous by the delightful collection of stories entitled *Mosses from an Old Manse*, published in 1846, the year in which he left this congenial spot to accept the surveyorship of the Salem Custom-house. From this post he was unexpectedly discharged in 1849, while in the midst of his labours upon his first great romance. He finished this and it was given to the public in the spring of 1850 under the title of *The Scarlet Letter*.

It was immedi-

ately successful, established Hawthorne's fame permanently as one of the greatest of romancers, and has since been popularly regarded as his highest achievement, if not as the greatest book in American literature.

After the publication of *The Scarlet Letter* Hawthorne removed to Lenox, Massachusetts, and there wrote *The House of Seven Gables* (1851), preferred by some readers to the former romance, and a few months later he delighted young people by *The Wonder Book*. Then, settling near Boston, he wrote *The Blithedale Romance* (1852). Returning once more to Concord, he purchased The Wayside, and rejoiced in the election to the presidency of his friend Franklin Pierce, of whom he had written a biography for

**Hawthorne
as a famous
author.**



THE OLD MANSE, CONCORD, MASS.

use in the campaign. In return for this support Pierce finally induced Hawthorne to accept the lucrative position of consul at Liverpool, whither he sailed in the summer of 1853. Ten years later the impressions he formed of England were recorded in his interesting book *Our Old Home*, which is supplemented by his posthumous *English Note-books*. Having retained his consulship for four years, he made with his family a journey to the Continent, remaining for about a year and a half, chiefly in Italy. There he began the last of his important romances, *The Marble Faun*, in which the charm of the most beautiful and romantic of lands blends with that of Hawthorne's elusive genius. *The Marble Faun* was finished in England in 1860 and was published there under the title of *Transformation*. In June of this year Hawthorne returned to America, like his great predecessor Cooper, a seven years' exile, and like him, but not to the same extent perhaps, out of touch with the times.

The struggle over slavery and with regard to the nature of the central government was about to culminate in civil

war; but strife was intensely distasteful to
Closing Hawthorne, and both by nature and by hered-
years. itary and acquired political proclivities he

was disposed to stand aloof from the dominant party in the North. He took up his abode at Concord, watched events with loyalty to the Union, but with forebodings of its doom, and vainly strove to parallel his former successes in romance. His mind was disturbed, his health undermined, as his posthumous stories, such as *Septimius Felton* and *Dr. Grimshawe's Secret*, plainly showed. In 1864, a rapid decline set in, and on May 24, while on a visit to the White Mountains, he died suddenly at Plymouth, New Hampshire. He was buried at Concord,



R. W. Emerson

the scene of his most peaceful years and of the creation of some of his most characteristic tales. If it was the irony of fate that this lover of peace and of his fellows should have died in the midst of one of the most frightful campaigns of the greatest of civil wars, it was surely a propitious fate that gave him his final resting-place near the graves of Emerson and Thoreau in the quiet town with the sweet, auspicious name.

With regard to the unique and permanent value of Hawthorne's work as a romancer there is practically no dissent among critics writing in English. He is not, for various reasons, very widely known outside the English-speaking countries, but within these he is probably regarded by a majority of critics and readers as the greatest American writer of fiction and as the possessor of a uniquely subtle imagination. Whether his admirers are right in claiming supremacy for him over such writers as Cooper and Poe is a matter so difficult to settle that it need not be argued here; nor need we try to determine whether or not his intellectual and imaginative powers were subject to limitations not fully perceived and acknowledged by his readers. It must suffice to acknowledge with gratitude his great hold upon the public and the lustre he sheds upon American literature, and to attempt to point out some of the qualities of his work that make it unique.

Hawthorne is unique among American authors in his ability to throw a glamour over the past. He does not paint brilliant scenes or set heroic characters in motion as Scott does; but in delicately wrought little masterpieces like "The Gray Champion" and the four "Legends of the Province House" and in *The Scarlet Letter*, the past of New England

**Hawthorne's
place in
literature.**

**Hawthorne's
qualities.**

seems to speak to us with an authentic voice. He is also unique among American authors because he is apparently the only one who both in his slight and in his elaborate works maintains his style and his substance at a high artistic level. In other words, like the truly great masters of literature, he is never slovenly in workmanship and has to his credit works demanding sustained power. In this respect he has an advantage over Poe, who wrote no great elaborate romance, while on the other hand Poe has an advantage over Hawthorne in having succeeded both in poetry and in prose fiction. It is true that Hawthorne is not always to be counted on to give us his best, and that his best has not the power of the supreme masters. His style may not be sufficiently varied, he may allegorise and moralise overmuch; but we feel that to emphasise these points would be hypercritical in view of the admirable qualities of his work as a whole. He is, then, the most uniformly excellent of American writers.

He is, furthermore, unique, as practically every one has agreed, in the peculiar nature of his imagination. His

**His unique
imagination.**

genius is so individual that the term "Hawthornesque" bears a more or less definite meaning. It suggests a romance or tale in which are blended mystery, pathos, gentle humour, subtle fancy, love and comprehension of the past, a power of laying bare the burdened conscience, a tendency to allegorise and deal with symbols, and other equally subtle elements. To speak of such an imagination as surpassed only by that of Shakespeare is an exaggeration, but to speak of it without respect, not to say enthusiasm, seems to be a confession of one's own limitations.

Hawthorne's tales are a perennial delight to many readers who even prefer them to his elaborate romances. They

are steeped in a subtle and pure charm resulting from the blending of grace, fancy, humour, and a sense for the spiritual and symbolic. He ranks with Poe, **The tales.** Daudet, and Maupassant among the great modern masters of the short-story. "The Artist of the Beautiful," "The Celestial Railroad," "A Select Party," "The Threefold Destiny," "Rappaccini's Daughter," and "Young Goodman Brown"—these and many other stories confirm his title to this distinction.

In his long romances Hawthorne may fairly claim to have fewer rivals worth considering than he has in his short stories. Only one of these romances, **The romances.** however, *The Scarlet Letter*, has a subject that makes a universal appeal. Every one can sympathise with the leading characters suffering from the results of their sins; not every one can so thoroughly feel with and comprehend the characters of the other books. Still, *The House of Seven Gables*, in its description of the old mansion and the old maid, to say nothing of other features, has for some readers an attraction possessed by nothing else that Hawthorne wrote. Others prefer the Brook Farm story, *The Blithedale Romance*, which contains memorable scenes and in a way seems nearer to actual, every-day life than its companion romances. The public, however, has hitherto placed *The Marble Faun*, if not above *The Scarlet Letter* in merit, at least above it so far as general enjoyment is concerned; while competent critics have declared that it is on the whole the thinnest and least attractive of Hawthorne's romances. This is a point on which the reader may form his own judgment, but not until he has acknowledged the evasive charm of the book and the beauty of its descriptions, or until he has surrendered himself to the almost magical power of this

great writer as it is displayed in the entire range of his tales and romances.

The only American imaginative writer who can be said to rival Hawthorne on fairly equal terms is Edgar Allan Poe, who is regarded by a respectable minority of **Poe's fame.** his countrymen and by a majority of foreign critics and readers as the greatest author America has yet produced. Unfortunately, much controversy has arisen over the claims put forward by Poe's admirers; the man's sad and wayward life has been indiscreetly defended or else painted in too sombre colours; his limitations as an artist have been overlooked, or else, on the other hand, his many merits have been minimised. Worse still, a sectional spirit has pervaded American criticism, hostility to Poe or partiality towards him being apparently too frequently determined by the locality of the critic's or the reader's birth. It is needless to say that, such being the case, the verdict of foreigners is of especial value, since they have no sectional prejudices to contend against, and that it behooves every one who expresses an opinion on the questions involved to approach their consideration not in a spirit of partisanship, but in that of an unbiassed literary student. On the other hand, if one should refuse to consume one's time in discussing such questions, one would not be altogether lacking in wisdom; and it is at least clear that the fact that Poe's fame has been steadily growing for half a century is not one at which any one zealous for the good name of American literature should in the least repine.

Poe was born in Boston on January 19, 1809. His **Poe's youth.** parents were then acting at the Federal Street Theatre; his father, who came of a good Maryland family, having followed the profession of

the English actress, Elizabeth Arnold, whom he married as a young widow. Misfortune attended the pair and finally Poe, with an elder brother and a younger sister, was left an orphan at Richmond, Virginia, at the end of 1811. All three children were adopted, Edgar being taken by Mrs. John Allan, wife of a well-to-do tobacco merchant. Four years later the Allans went to England on business, taking the boy with them. He was put to school at Stoke Newington and thus got his only experience of the Old World. In 1820, the family returned and the lad finished his schooling in Richmond, showing proficiency in the languages, in verse-writing, and in athletics, particularly in swimming. He was evidently talented and perhaps too much encouraged to make a display of his accomplishments; but he was also, if we may trust his statements made in later life, prematurely subject to attacks of morbid melancholy.

In 1826, he was sent to the University of Virginia, which had just been founded by Jefferson at Charlottesville.

Student and soldier. There, although he still continued to show aptitude in literary studies, he led an ir-

regular life and was unfortunate enough to incur large gambling debts. Mr. Allan was naturally indignant, withdrew Poe from college, and placed him in his own counting-room. The confinement galled the high-strung youth, who was also involved in an inauspicious love-affair, and in some way he escaped from Richmond to Boston. There, on May 26, 1827, he enlisted in the army under the name of E. A. Perry, and there he published his first volume of verse—the anonymous *Tamerlane and Other Poems*. In the fall of 1827, he was transferred to Fort Moultrie, near Charleston—in other words, to the locality in which the scene of his famous tale, “The

Gold Bug," was to be laid. Then he served at Fortress Monroe, Virginia, and while there was reconciled with Mr. Allan about the time the latter's wife died. A substitute was provided for him, and he left the army with a reputation for excellent conduct. On July 1, 1830, he entered West Point on an appointment secured by Mr. Allan, having the year before published at Baltimore over his own name a second volume, entitled *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems*.

The confinement of the Academy soon wore on Poe, who had perhaps developed a taste for Bohemian life while waiting for admission. He was dissipated, neglected his duties, lampooned the instructors, and at last deliberately brought on a court-martial and dismissal by a total disregard of rules. Then he went to New York and published a volume entitled *Poems* (1831), which made no stir, although it contained the beautiful lyric, "To Helen," and the melodious "Israfel." Mr. Allan had married again and Poe could no longer look to him for help. He was facing life with a wonderfully rare and delicate genius in a country and epoch more propitious to rough-and-ready talents; and he had already handicapped himself by a stock of bad habits grafted upon an inherited tendency to dissipation. The outlook was a sorry one, but while the next twenty years were to bring him to a drunkard's grave, they were to add through him to the world's literature a mass of prose and poetry which mankind will not willingly let die.

Poe went from New York to Baltimore, where his widowed aunt, Mrs. Maria Clemm, and her young daughter, Virginia, perhaps gave him a home. Little is known of his life until nearly three years later, when, in October,

1833, his story, "MS. Found in a Bottle," won a prize of \$100 offered by a Baltimore journal. The poem he submitted, "The Coliseum," would also have won a smaller prize had he not written the successful story. The romancer, John P. Kennedy, was one of the judges, and after this took a kindly interest in Poe, helping to secure him employment on the newly established *Southern Literary Messenger*. In 1834, Poe went to Richmond and took practical charge of this magazine under its proprietor, Thomas W. White. Within a few months he had greatly increased its circulation, and by his caustic reviews had caused it to be talked of from one end of the country to the other.

Poe now thought his fortune made and imprudently contracted a premature marriage with his cousin, Virginia Clemm. Then his love of drink got the better of him, and White was unwillingly obliged to discharge him. The *Messenger* lived a fairly long life, partly on account of the impetus its young editor had given it; but Poe, so far as his character was concerned, had begun his permanently downward course. From Richmond he went to New York, where Mrs. Clemm supported the family by taking boarders. There, in 1837, his longest story, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, was published, and then he removed to Philadelphia, a city important for its periodicals of all sorts. Here the family remained for six years, Poe securing what work he could as editor, contributor and hack-writer. His bad habits caused him to lose such positions as the editorship of the successful *Graham's Magazine*; but he could not reform permanently, although for his own sake and for that of the wife he loved he made many efforts.

Poe's early
successes.

The down-
ward path.

Nevertheless Poe kept up his hopes. He even dreamed that he could establish a great magazine of his own; he collected his *Tales of the Grotesque and the*
Literary *Arabesque* (1839); he wrote master-pieces
achievements. like "The Fall of the House of Usher"; he developed his genius as an analyst and reasoner both in his criticism and in his detective stories; in short, he proved that his art was never surer and his mind never keener than at a time when his moral nature was rapidly breaking down. The pity of it all was enhanced by the fact that his child-wife showed unmistakable signs of consumption. The little household grieved and hoped together, and determined in the spring of 1844 to try to make another start in New York. There Poe gained work on newspapers, and at the opening of 1845 secured a world-wide, and as it now seems a permanent, fame by the publication of a single poem. On January 29, 1845, *The Evening Mirror* published from the advance-sheets of *The Whig Review* the immortal stanzas entitled "The Raven."

After "The Raven" had brought him so prominently before the public, Poe not only had gleams of hope connected with new editions of his poems and
Failures and tales, but actually thought that he had at
sorrows. last secured the realisation of his dearest wish—the establishment of an independent periodical under his control. He became associated in the management of *The Broadway Journal* and soon, through a quarrel with his partner, assumed the whole responsibility of the enterprise. But by the end of 1845 it had come to the untimely end that awaited most publications in those days of ephemeral magazines. Poe then removed to the suburb of Fordham, where his poor wife sank daily amid dire

poverty. His deplorable habits had neutralised his own efforts as well as those his friends were always willing to make in his behalf. And he had decreased the number of his friends and added to his enemies by most indiscreet and unjust attacks upon the popular Longfellow, whom he accused of plagiarism, by offensive criticism of New York literary people scarcely worthy of his notice, and by similar performances of bad taste and judgment. At last things grew so desperate that an appeal for public charity had to be made, and early in 1847 the young wife died. Poe himself suffered not only from grief at her loss, but from a long and dangerous illness; but he finally recovered his strength and went bravely to work, his aunt and mother-in-law, Mrs. Clemm, clinging to him with pathetic devotion.

He lectured in behalf of a new magazine project, and he laboured on a remarkable series of speculations with regard to the origin of the universe, which appeared under the title of *Eureka*—a book of no scientific value, but bearing testimony to the range and acuteness of its author's mind. But, unfortunately, Poe could not remain long in the realm of speculation or even in that of poetry—some of his best poems, "Ulalume," "Annabel Lee," and "The Bells," belong to the period that followed his wife's death—he needed feminine sympathy, and he soon began a series of courtships over which it is best to draw a veil. An engagement with a New England poetess, Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, had to be broken on account of his habits; then, during a visit to Richmond, in 1849, he managed to work on the sympathies of a former sweetheart and to become betrothed to her. He left Richmond for the North to make arrangements for the wedding, a few days later was found un-

Poe's last
years.

to the origin of the universe, which appeared
under the title of *Eureka*—a book of no scientific value, but bearing testimony to the range

conscious in an election-booth in Baltimore, was removed to a hospital, where he failed to respond to treatment, and died early on Sunday morning, October 7, 1849. Thus passed from the world this victim of inherited weaknesses and his own follies at an age when, if his genius had been properly fostered, he might have been at the height of a fortunate and honourable career.

As we have already seen, Poe's reputation has grown steadily since his death, in spite of unrelenting and numerous adverse influences. He has had unsympathetic and oversympathetic biographers, and has been made a subject of sectional jealousy. But the main reason why Poe did not at once, in the opinion of a majority of his countrymen, take a high place among American authors probably lies in the fact that of them all he is most completely the artist bent on creating new forms of beauty and scarcely giving a thought to the moral or purely useful qualities of his work. Most American writers have written for the greatest good of the greatest number. They have emphasised the moral and useful elements of their work, while not ignoring the claims of beauty, and have thus, in all probability, served the public for which they wrote better than they would have done had they put the demands of art above those of philanthropy. In the older civilisation of Europe art and philanthropy have been more entirely differentiated; hence Poe, the poet and romancer, has been judged more completely as an artist and in consequence more highly valued than he has been in America. But, as America has grown older and as the needs of her reading public have changed, a larger and larger number of Americans have come to appreciate the power and

**Growth of
Poe's repu-
tation.**

charm of Poe's work in verse and prose, finding in it the pure beauty they crave and not missing the moral and the useful which they can get from other sources. If Poe's work partook of the moral imperfections of his life, his fame would not, of course, be growing so steadily; but, fortunately for him and for us, his work is non-moral rather than immoral.

When we say that Poe's reputation rests mainly on the fact that he is an artistic creator of new forms of beauty, we are naturally obliged to say something of these forms as well as of the methods of work employed by the artist. Such a discussion to be adequate demands much space and so would be out of harmony with the scope of this book. A few points must, however, be treated briefly. Poe, the artist, as distinguished from Poe, the critic and writer of miscellaneous prose, expressed himself best in two special forms of literature, the lyric poem and the short story of a romantic or else an analytic type. In his early years he made attempts at narrative and dramatic poetry; but from the first his forte lay not merely in lyrics, but in lyrics of a narrow, well-defined variety—lyrics scarcely rivalled in their melody and their haunting refrains, and equally unrivalled in their imaginative expression of longing and regret. In quantity and range, his poetry suggests the scanty work of Gray rather than the fairly copious work of Tennyson; if he is to be ranked high as a poet, it must be on the score of the exquisite and unique quality of his work. And it is precisely this quality of his poetry with respect to form, colour, and substance that stamps Poe as one of the most original and important of modern poets and accounts for the fact that many recent lyric poets have shown traces of his influence. As illustrative

of his peculiar excellences the following famous stanzas may be cited:

TO HELEN

Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicæan barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs, have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!

Turning to his fiction, we find that there, too, Poe is best in forms requiring only a short flight of the imagination. His single long story, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, has merits, but has very rarely been regarded as a great book. His short stories, however, display a wider range of themes and powers, though probably a less delicate art than his short poems. Some are tragic, like "The Cask of Amontillado," some terrible, like "The Pit and the Pendulum," some morbid, like "The Black Cat," some ethereally lovely, like "Eleonora," some hauntingly mysterious, like "The Fall of the House of Usher," some darkly and deeply impressive, like "Shadow." A large group, not indeed illustrating his best qualities, are full of humorous and grotesque effects. Another group, represented by

the admirable "Descent into the Maelstrom," turn with great plausibility the facts of science to marvellously strange account. Still another group of so-called detective stories, such as "The Purloined Letter," show Poe's remarkably analytical powers of mind. Indeed, he may, in a sense, be regarded as the practical creator of this form of fiction. There is here an obviously wider range of powers than is represented by poems like "The Raven," "The Bells," "The Haunted Palace," and Poe's other lyric achievements. In verbal style, Poe the writer of prose is probably not equal to Poe the poet, but in the general management of his stories he is surely among the masters of his craft.

In one respect he is almost unique—in the grip he secures upon the imagination of his readers. He has not the sustained power of some romancers; he is surpassed by many when it is a question of securing a reader's sympathies or moving him to smiles or tears; but when it is a question of holding a reader spellbound or leading his imagination hither and yon, Poe need fear few comparisons. The permanence of his fiction seems, therefore, as assured as that of his poetry, and its rank is very high. It is on the two forms of appeal he thus makes that his admirers rest their belief that his fame is destined to increase until it is at least acknowledged that he has no superior among American authors. They point moreover to the fact that he was an acute, if often too censorious critic, who did much good by teaching the American public to discriminate between genuine and would-be men of letters, as well as a brilliant reasoner on metaphysical, critical and other topics. On all these points also voices are heard opposing Poe's claims to eminence; but, if one may judge

**Uniqueness
and perma-
nence of his
art.**

the future from the experience of the past half century, it would seem that a decisive victory will be obtained by Poe's admirers, if indeed they are not already victorious.

Besides Hawthorne and Poe and the older writers contemporary with Cooper there were at least a dozen roman-

Kennedy. cers well known between 1830 and 1850,

whose works are now comparatively forgotten, although not devoid of merit. One romancer who began to publish toward the end of the period, Her-



J. P. Kennedy

man Melville, has had of late some revival of fame, but his case is practically unique. As we have already seen, only Kennedy, Bird, and Simms need be grouped with Melville as representing minor writers of fiction whose work deserves brief mention. Of these the first named, John Pendleton Kennedy (1795-1870), a Baltimorean of high social and political standing—he was Secretary of the Navy under

Fillmore—is chiefly remembered as the author of *Swallow Barn* (1832), a pleasant story of country life in Virginia, and of *Horse-Shoe Robinson* (1835), a romance of the Revolution in its Southern phases. The latter romance is one of the best of its period and is on the whole worthy of being better known. Another book of Kennedy's, also excellent in its somewhat old-fashioned way, is his *Memoirs of the Life of William Wirt*.

Dr. Robert Montgomery Bird (1803-1854), long a resident of Philadelphia, wrote tragedies, one of

Bird.

which, *The Gladiator*, is still remembered, and romances dealing with the Spanish conquest of Mexico.

His most popular book was *Nick of the Woods* (1837), a story of the backwoods and the Indians, which set in relief the atrocities committed by the savages and served in a way as a foil to Cooper's more ideal pictures of frontier life. It was a favourite boy's book until the cheaper fiction known as "dime novels" superseded it in popularity. Bird's other works are negligible, but he deserves remembrance as a once popular and a conscientious writer.

William Gilmore Simms (1806-70), of Charleston, was, with the exception of Poe, the most important Southern writer before the civil war and also the most prolific and ablest of the followers of Cooper.

He was born poor, but lifted himself to comparative eminence by his own exertions. He began his literary career as a poet and never ceased to write verse, but obtained real success only in fiction. He struck his vein in 1834 with *Guy Rivers*, a tale of adventures in the Georgia gold-fields, which was the first of a series of romances dealing with life in the far Southern and Southwestern States. Better than any of these was *The Yemassee* (1835), a story of Colonial South Carolina and the Southern Indians almost worthy of Cooper. The same year, with *The Partisan*, Simms began another series of romances, this time dealing with the Revolution in South Carolina. During twenty years he added to this series, and although his numerous volumes bore many marks of hurried writing, they also showed signs of indisputable talents for story-telling. They describe the adventures in swamp and forest of the patriotic soldiers who followed Marion and Sumter, are full of not unwholesome excitement, and present something of the charm of Southern life and scenery. But while these Revolutionary romances taken as a whole constitute Simms' best title

to remembrance, his best single book is probably the little known tale of early Charleston and the pirates, *The Cassique of Kiawah*, published just before the civil war. The war ruined Simms, who as a pamphleteer and editor had done something to fan the dissensions that brought it on. After the struggle was over, he made brave but futile efforts to repair his shattered fortunes. He was a strong, interesting man, endowed with energy and talents that would have won him a higher place in literature had he lived in a more propitious age and in a section more disposed to encourage its writers.

Herman Melville (1819-91) was born in New York city, was set to farming, deserted this for the sea, then tried teaching, and in 1841 shipped on a voyage
Melville. to the South Seas. His captain's cruelty caused him and a companion to desert the ship in a harbour of the Marquesas. The adventures that followed and



Herman Melville.

the charms of tropical life were interestingly described in *Typee*, published in 1846, soon after Melville made his way back to civilisation. Several other books were then written by the sailor-author, who had been encouraged by the deserved success of his first volume. In one, *Moby Dick*, a story describing the pursuit of an invincible white whale, his powers culminated. It is in parts prob-

ably not exceeded in strength and general interest by any other romance of the sea. It is too long and too packed with details to suit some tastes, but these faults will

scarcely be noticed by readers who once catch a portion of Captain Ahab's demoniacal eagerness to encounter the terrible monster. *Moby Dick* was issued in 1851, the year Melville's friend Hawthorne published that very different romance, *The House of the Seven Gables*. Later Melville paralleled Hawthorne's experience by becoming a custom-house official, but the numerous books he wrote gave painful proofs of mental aberration. Four books at most, the two mentioned, together with *Omoo* and *White Jacket*, constitute his legacy to posterity, and these, as we have seen, are being read of late with the favour which their descriptive power and vivid interest deserve. But in spite of the genuine merits of Kennedy, Bird, Simms and Melville, it remains true that the really significant fiction of the period, so far as most readers are concerned, is to be found in the works of Hawthorne and Poe.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR CHAPTER VII

A. For General and Special Works and Anthologies, see the Bibliography at the end of Chapter I.

B. **Helps for Further Study.**—The standard edition of Hawthorne is the *Riverside*, in twelve volumes. For his life see Julian Hawthorne's *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife* (2 vols., 1885), and the same writer's *Hawthorne and His Circle* (1903); also Henry James's biography (*English Men of Letters*, 1879); Moncure Conway's *Great Writers* (1890), and George E. Woodberry's *American Men of Letters* (1902). For Poe, the chief early editions are those of Griswold (3 vols., 1850; vol. iv, 1856), J. H. Ingram (4 vols., 1874-75), and R. H. Stoddard (6 vols., 1884). The chief modern editions are the Stedman-Woodberry (10 vols., 1894-95), with good critical apparatus; the *Virginia* edition (17 vols., 1902), edited by Prof. James A. Harrison, much the fullest in matter and the most authentic in text; and the *Arnheim*, edited by Prof. C. F. Richardson (1902). Of the

numerous biographies the most important are those by Griswold (1850), by W. F. Gill (1877; 3d edition, 1878), by J. H. Ingram (2 vols., 1880; new edition in 1 vol., 1886), by G. E. Woodberry (*American Men of Letters*, 1885), by the same in vol. i of the Stedman-Woodberry edition (1894), and by J. A. Harrison (*Virginia* edition, vol. i, 1902, also published along with Poe's *Letters* in two volumes). The *Letters* of R. W. Griswold (1898) may also be consulted. For Kennedy, see Tuckerman's biography (1871), the tenth volume in the uniform edition of Kennedy's works. For Simms, see Trent's biography in the *American Men of Letters* (1892). Melville's *Typee*, *Omoo*, *Moby Dick* and *White Jacket* were edited in four volumes, with an introduction by Arthur Stedman, in 1892.

CHAPTER VIII

THE POETS (1830-1850)

ALTHOUGH America had produced many versifiers before the year 1830, Bryant, as we have seen, was the only considerable poet among them. The **Poetry of the period.** twenty years that followed saw the establishment of the poetic fame of Poe and of the New England group—Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes and Lowell, to whom should be added Nathaniel Parker Willis, although his once brilliant reputation is now rather dim. As in the preceding period, there was a very large number of men and women devoting themselves to the production of verses which their contemporaries received with a delight almost incomprehensible to us.

Who these poets were and what kind of verse they wrote can be well judged from a single compilation, *Poets and Poetry of America* (1842), edited by an **Griswold's anthology.** indefatigable critic of the time, the Rev. Rufus Wilmot Griswold, who, unfortunately, was not a sympathetic editor of Poe, and has in consequence seldom received full justice for his services to our literature during its early struggles. Most of the verse-writers who furnished materials for Griswold's pages and contributed to the newspapers and numerous magazines of the day deserve remembrance only in mass and because they raised somewhat the general standards of taste throughout the country—for these votaries of the muse

were to be found in every locality from Maine to Arkansas. A few of them, however, should be mentioned by name, in addition to those already treated among the Transcendentalists, (pp. 116-117), because each possessed a small, distinctive talent.

Charles Fenno Hoffman, of New York, and Epes Sargent, of Boston, were both versatile writers, who, if they

had confined themselves to composing songs,
Some minor for which they had a decided bent, would
poets.

probably have gained permanent reputations. As it is, Sargent's "A Life on the Ocean Wave" is still familiar. Familiar also are the pretty lyrics of two Southerners, the "Florence Vane" of Philip Pendleton Cooke, of Virginia, and "My Life is Like the Summer Rose" by Richard Henry Wilde, who lived in Georgia and Louisiana, but also spent several years in Italy, where he studied the great Italian poets and helped to discover Giotto's famous portrait of Dante. A poet connecting New England and the Southwest is Albert Pike, who was born in Boston, but lived long in Arkansas. His *Hymns to the Gods*, lyrics on classical themes written under the inspiration of Coleridge and Keats, possess sufficient merit to make them better known. This is still more true of the translations from Dante and the original poems of Dr. Thomas William Parsons (1819-92), of Boston, a modest friend of many of the great New England writers. His "Lines on a Bust of Dante" have long been with justice admired and have been saved, together with other single poems, such as the Kentuckian Theodore O'Hara's "Bivouac of the Dead," from the vast mass of early American verse which a single half century has sufficed to send to oblivion. Time, which has dealt in so ruthless a manner with the small poets, has, nevertheless,

been kind to the larger ones, to whom we may now turn with pleasure.

The most popular of American poets is, without a doubt, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who was born at Portland, Maine, on February 27, 1807. He received a good schooling, graduated from Bowdoin with Hawthorne, wrote verses for magazines, and chose the life of a teacher and writer rather than that of a lawyer, which his father wished him to try. In 1826, he went to Europe, in order to fit himself to teach the modern languages at Bowdoin, and he was much impressed by what he saw and read in France, Spain and Italy. He returned in 1829, and for a few years filled his chair at Bowdoin with success, teaching and lecturing, editing text-books, and writing for the magazines. Then, having been called to Harvard to succeed George Ticknor, he sailed for Europe with his young wife in the spring of 1835, in order to perfect himself in the Teutonic languages. His wife died in Holland, and the event profoundly stirred Longfellow's emotional nature. He yielded himself willingly to the charm of German sentimental literature and was also much influenced by Swedish poetry.

**Longfellow's
early life.**



H. W. Longfellow

Late in 1836, he began to teach at Harvard and did not resign his chair until 1854, by which time the income arising from his writings was sufficient to enable him to give up labours not altogether congenial to him. During

this period he not only made himself popular by such short pieces as the "Psalm of Life" and "The Bridge,"

as well as by the more ambitious *Evangeline*, but also won the love of his countrymen by the purity and the modesty of his life and of his writings. He made a happy second marriage and lived with his wife and children in dignified comfort in the



LONGFELLOW'S BIRTHPLACE,
PORTLAND, MAINE.

now famous Craigie House at Cambridge. His popularity was enhanced by the publication of such poems as *Hiawatha* and *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, and although the work of his closing years was, on the whole, not of remarkable quality, he held the love of his readers till the day of his death. This love was yielded to him all the more freely after a tragic turn

had been given to his quiet life by the fatal burning of his second wife in 1861. He bore his loss bravely, travelled, published new collections of poems, translated *The Divine Comedy* of Dante, received testimonials of homage of every kind, and finally died quietly at his home on March 24, 1882. His life was as beautiful, and but for his domestic tragedy might be pronounced as serene, as any other recorded in the annals of literary men.

Longfellow's first important book was *Outre-Mer; a Pilgrimage Beyond the Sea* (1835), a volume compiled from magazine sketches describing his European experiences. It is of little consequence now, but was important in its day as continuing the work begun by Irving of introducing a taste for

**Longfellow's
early
writings.**

travel and for Continental literatures among the American people. This useful work Longfellow continued to perform throughout his life by means of his admirable poetical translations, especially from the Spanish and Italian, the Swedish and the German. His rank as a verse translator, particularly of German lyrics, is very high. In 1839, he published two books, *Hyperion*, a once popular romance of the German type, which with *Kavanagh* (1849) practically sums up his attempts in prose fiction—and *Voices of the Night*, a collection of poems which, through such simple appeals to the popular heart as that made by the "Psalm of Life," laid the basis of his permanent fame. This fame was rendered still more secure by *Ballads and Other Poems* (1841) and *The Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems* (1845), in which were found such excellent pieces as "Excelsior," "The Skeleton in Armor," "The Wreck of the Hesperus," "The Bridge," and "The Day is Done," the two last-named lyrics probably representing better than almost any other poems of their author Longfellow's power to touch the general human heart by his felicitous expression of pensive sentiment.

Then, in 1847, he published his first fairly elaborate poem, *Evangeline*, and reached with this pathetic idyll the zenith of his popularity. *Evangeline* is as fresh and delightful to-day to thousands of readers as it was to those Americans of over half a century ago who fondly exclaimed that a great native poet had at last arisen among them. It is to be hoped that the criticism which justly finds some fault with the hexameters in which the poem is written and, in other respects, qualifies the praise once lavished upon it, will blind no one to its essential excellence as a moving tale in verse. Excellences which critical readers

His longer poems.

have discovered in the pictures of mediæval life given in *The Golden Legend* (1851) have never made that book popular. Perhaps Longfellow sealed its fate when he finally made it a constituent part of his long poem *Chris-*



"CRAIGIE HOUSE," LONGFELLOW'S HOME IN CAMBRIDGE.

tus, which was intended to describe Christendom in the apostolic, mediæval, and modern periods—a task altogether beyond the author's sweet, calm genius. His

attempt to write an epic on a theme less exalted and nearer home, *Hiawatha* (1855), based on Indian folk-lore and presented in a novel metrical form, was deservedly more successful. It has long been popular with the young and with many older readers. Some persons think, however, that Longfellow surpassed it in *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858), in which his powers as a narrative poet and a depicter of manners and character culminated admirably.

Many other volumes followed this spirited account of the wooing of the arch Priscilla by the bashful John Alden,

The work of later years.

but not more than one need be named here, since the most important work of Longfellow's later years, his translation of Dante, has been already mentioned. The single exception is the first series of his *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863), which

contains "Paul Revere's Ride" and the vigorous "Saga of King Olaf." During the nineteen years that remained to him Longfellow, as a practised poet is sure to do, added single poems to his works which his admirers would not willingly lose; but he can scarcely be said materially to have increased his reputation except as a writer of sonnets.

Longfellow's popularity did not secure him against hostile criticism during his life—Margaret Fuller and Poe were particularly censorious—and since his death his fame has suffered a considerable decline among highly cultivated readers. The mass of the people still seems, however, to remain constant in its affections, and there are reasons for believing that the depreciation of the critically minded has gone too far. Not only is Longfellow's rare power of going straight to human hearts by his reflective lyrics and his simple narratives not estimated at its true worth, but his versatility, his success as a translator, his ability to infuse an old world charm into his own poetry, and especially, his very exceptional command of all save the highest metrical resources of the language, have been set in the background. On the other hand, emphasis has been laid on his comparative lack of deep thought, his inability to produce strong emotions, his large indebtedness to other poets, and his failure fully to satisfy stringent modern tests of poetic style in its various phases.

In insisting upon these plain defects, critics and fastidious readers have been within their rights, and they have done good by rendering it unlikely that Longfellow's countrymen will ever again do him the injustice of speaking and writing about him in enthusiastic language that would scarcely be

Longfellow's reputation.

His genuine merits.

warranted if applied to a Wordsworth or a Shelley. But in forgetting to insist sufficiently upon Longfellow's equally obvious merits, these critics and readers do the poet and their country's literature an injustice. Longfellow was a well-endowed genuine poet, unexcelled in simple forms of appeal, a versatile and highly competent artist, a man of letters of very wide and true culture, and finally an intellectual, æsthetic, and moral force in American literature and life the importance of which cannot easily be overestimated. None of our writers deserves more respect; none has more justly earned or completely received his countrymen's gratitude and love, in which thousands of readers in England and on the continent of Europe have been delighted to join. As long as human nature is what it is, so long will men's hearts respond to the simple, wholesome charm of such stanzas as these from "The Bridge":

Yet whenever I cross the river
On its bridge with wooden piers,
Like the odor of brine from the ocean
Comes the thought of other years.

And I think how many thousands
Of care-encumbered men,
Each bearing his burden of sorrow,
Have crossed the bridge since then.

I see the long procession
Still passing to and fro.
The young heart hot and restless,
And the old subdued and slow!

And forever and forever,
As long as the river flows,
As long as the heart has passions,
As long as life has woes,

The moon and its broken reflection
 And its shadows shall appear,
 As the symbol of love in heaven,
 And its wavering image here.

Longfellow's gentle life was not greatly disturbed even by the civil war and the dissensions that led up to it, but such was not the case with his contemporary, John Greenleaf Whittier. The Quaker poet of freedom was born on December 17, 1807, at East Haverhill, Massachusetts. He grew up as a farmer's lad with little schooling but much good training, and in after years he gave in *Snow-Bound* a beautiful picture of his simple home. As a mere youth he wrote verses which were received with more cordiality than their merits warranted. He then secured about a year's instruction and began life on a newspaper in Boston. Later he managed his father's farm, then tried newspaper work in Hartford, and finally returned home on account of his poor health.



John G. Whittier

From 1832 to 1836 he lived at Haverhill and took considerable interest in politics, having especially in mind the problem of emancipating the slaves. From 1836 for the rest of his life, except for short periods, he made his home at the village of Amesbury. One of these periods of absence he spent in Philadelphia (1838-39), where he edited an antislavery journal, *The Pennsylvania Freeman*. Here he showed

**Whittier's
youth.**

**The opponent
of slavery.**

courage when the printing-office of the paper was sacked and burned, those being days when extreme utterances against slavery were not willingly tolerated anywhere in the country. But Whittier was not to be silenced, and after 1833, when he published his pamphlet, *Justice and Expediency*, he was not only a bold, but an astute supporter of the antislavery cause. Unlike many of his fellow abolitionists, he believed in securing his ends through the agency of a political party, and, perhaps, had his health permitted, he might have become famous as a statesman. As it was, he served his cause chiefly by his ringing lyrics, through which he brought home to thousands of men and women in the North and West the general and the specific evils of slavery.

His poems were collected without his knowledge in 1838; five years later a collection sold well enough to bring him in a little money. In 1847, he began to contribute to *The New Era*, the antislavery journal which first gave Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to the world. Here he published poetry

A popular
post.



"OAK KNOLL," WHITTIER'S HOME
IN DANVERS, MASS.

and a considerable amount of prose, some of which, while never likely to be popular, is not without merit. During the civil war he wrote some of his most stirring lyrics like "Barbara Frietchie" and toward its close he suffered, in the death of his sister Elizabeth, a loss particu-

larly severe in view of the fact that he never married. In 1866, he published his best poem, *Snow-Bound*, and after

this was not only in easy financial circumstances, but was the recipient of much popular love and homage. It is pleasant to add that he endeavoured to assuage the animosities caused by the war and thus prepared for himself a mellow, gracious old age. He died on September 7, 1892, at Hampton Falls, a New Hampshire resort. His last verses were a sweet tribute of friendship to Oliver Wendell Holmes, a pleasant close for a life the prime of which was spent amid the jars of civil factions.

As we are not accustomed to think of Whittier's work in terms of separate volumes, even a selected list of his

**"Snow-
Bound."**

books is not needed. It is sufficient to say that in 1836 he published a long Indian poem,

Mogg Megone, which had far too much Walter Scott in it and not enough Whittier, and thirty years later another poem suggesting "The Cotter's Saturday Night" of another Scotch poet, Burns, but also full of the true Quaker poet and of the New England in which he lived. The latter poem was *Snow-Bound*, probably the best description of rural life in winter that any American poet has given us.

The rest of Whittier's verse is most conveniently considered under the classification which he adopted for his

**Ballads and
other poems.**

upwards of five hundred more or less short poems. His "Poems of Nature" contain several good pieces like "St. Martin's Summer," and some competent judges find in them faithful and charming descriptions of New England scenery. The group entitled "Poems Subjective and Reminiscent" would be rendered excellent by *Snow-Bound* alone, but it also contains such appealing poems as "Memories" and "In Schooldays." Under "Ballads" we find some of the most popular of Whittier's pieces, for example, "Skipper

Ireson's Ride" and the pleasantly sentimental "Maud Muller." Upon this section of his work Whittier bestowed considerable pains. He sought materials in various books, especially in such as dealt with Indian, Quaker and Puritan subjects; but although he achieved fair success, he can scarcely with justice be said to have displayed the powers of a great balladist.

His true poetic powers, as the public long since perceived, are chiefly displayed in his "Personal Poems" and in his "Antislavery Poems." In the first group he paid inspiring tributes to philanthropists and reformers, particularly to those who were fighting with him against slavery. The finest of these poems—one of the most impassioned in our literature—is, however, a protest rather than a tribute. This is the famous "Ichabod," written after Daniel Webster by his support of the Compromise of 1850 had forfeited the confidence of the Abolitionists. The poem is not just to Webster, and it should always be read in connection with "The Lost Occasion," in which Whittier took a more dispassionate view of the dead statesman's conduct; but whether true to fact or not, it is a most impressive lyric, as the following stanzas witness:

**Personal
poems.**

So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn
Which once he wore!
The glory from his grey hairs gone
Forevermore!

Oh, dumb be passion's stormy rage,
When he who might
Have lighted up and led his age,
Falls back in night.

Of all we loved and honoured, naught
 Save power remains;
 A fallen angel's pride of thought,
 Still strong in chains.

All else is gone; from those great eyes
 The soul has fled;
 When faith is lost, when honour dies,
 The man is dead.

Then, pay the reverence of old days
 To his dead fame;
 Walk backward, with averted gaze,
 And hide the shame!

Much the same praise may be given to the "Antislavery Poems." People will long continue to argue with regard to the substantial truth and justice of such pieces as "Massachusetts to Virginia" and "Barbara Frietchie;" but whatever one's views may be with regard to the causes of the civil war, there ought to be no question as to Whittier's sincerity or his great success in so presenting his emotions as to arouse those of his readers. Such verses as "Randolph of Roanoke," "The Crisis," and "Moloch in State Street," ring true and go to the heart as lyric poetry of their kind ought to do. No other contemporary American poet possessed so fully the power of inciting his countrymen to support the cause of liberty, hence Whittier abundantly deserves the title of "the Poet of Freedom."

As in the case of Longfellow, latter-day critics have not shown themselves altogether gracious to Whittier as a poetic artist, and it would seem that their strictures have considerable foundation.

Whittier made better use of his poetic gifts than many poets have made of their superior endowments;

**Antislavery
poems.**

**Whittier's
art.**

but his gifts were comparatively slender, and he recognised the fact more clearly than his contemporaries did. He possessed intensity of emotion and enough technical skill to produce the main effects he aimed at; but he did not have sufficient intellectual and imaginative power or sufficient taste in æsthetic matters to secure a high place among the world's poets. He lacked the ability to be concise, and in his diction and rhythm, and particularly in his rhymes, he was often slovenly. Modern readers rightly care more about such matters than their fathers appear to have done, hence they cannot give Whittier unqualified praise as a poet; but they would do him gross injustice if they did not freely acknowledge his admirable character as a man and his eminent services to American life and literature.

The next member of the distinguished group of New England poets, Oliver Wendell Holmes, stands like Lowell

in the first rank of

**Holmes's
early life.**

American prose writers, but like him may be appropriately treated here. Holmes (whose father was a clergyman and a historian) was born at Cambridge, Massachusetts, August 29, 1809. He was descended from a long line of clerical, or to use his own phrase, Brahmin ancestors, from whose extreme theological views he was destined to revolt. He



O. W. Holmes.

graduated from Harvard in the class of 1829, which he made famous in numerous reunion poems. A year

after graduating he wrote his popular "Old Ironsides," a plea for the preservation of the historic frigate, Constitution. In 1831, he composed "The Last Leaf," one of the best occasional poems in the language, and a little later his amusing piece "The Comet." In other words, Holmes by the age of twenty-three had given clear proofs that his talents lay in writing social and humorous verse. He perfected his mastery of these forms, but his later efforts to attain success in other fields of poetry, while respectable, did not much avail him. It is curious to notice also that his special vein as a prose writer appeared as early as 1831, when he published in a magazine the first of two papers entitled "The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table."

Writings such as these did not warrant Holmes in making letters a profession, so he prudently studied medicine

Physician
and poet.

both in Boston and in Paris. On his return he practised in Boston, married, and printed both medical essays and occasional verses. In 1847, having previously taught in the medical school at Dartmouth, he accepted the chair of Anatomy and Physiology at Harvard, and until 1882 gave much of his time to the duties of the position. He still wrote poems and delivered literary lectures, and in 1857 found just the opening for his genius that he had long needed. In that year *The Atlantic Monthly* was founded, and its editor, Lowell, asked his friend Dr. Holmes to become a contributor. The latter took his early "Autocrat" papers, put his ripened humour and wisdom into them, and produced the most famous of his books, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table* (1858). *The Professor at the Breakfast-Table* followed in 1860 and in 1861 the first of Holmes's novels, *Elsie Venner*.

His fame as a prose writer was now secure, and his standing as a poet was strengthened by such admirable pieces as "The Chambered Nautilus" and "The Deacon's Masterpiece," which had been inserted in *The Autocrat*. Many books followed, but they need not be chronicled, since the main facts with regard to Holmes's later years are that he was regarded as summing up in his person and his writings the peculiar excellences of Boston, and that, as the other



HOLMES'S BIRTHPLACE.

great New England authors died, he, the last survivor of his group, concentrated upon himself the love and homage of his countrymen.

He preserved in a wonderful fashion his geniality and elasticity of spirits up to the day of his death—October 7, 1894. He was not the greatest of his group, but he was the mellowest and most humane product of New England culture.

As a matter of course Holmes's works have been gathered in editions that include his medical papers, his magazine articles, and his biographical studies, as well as his poems, his novels and his table-talk series. Equally as a matter of course many hundreds of his pages find but few readers. Even the poems are not easily read in their entirety. They yield a small volume of humorous, sentimental, and

A famous
writer.

Holmes's
poetry.

pathetic verses that are thoroughly charming—pieces like those already named and “Dorothy Q.,” “On Sending a Punch Bowl,” “Meeting of the Alumni of Harvard College, 1857,” and others—but they yield a larger volume of only fairly good or else positively tedious pieces. At his best he is a delightful poet, resembling in his choice of subjects and his fondness for the heroic couplet, the best of the eighteenth-century masters of urban verse; but he lacks the depth and range of emotion requisite to the production of profoundly impressive poetry. Such a stanza as that which brings “The Chambered Nautilus” to a close, is exceptional, not characteristic, and excellent, not supreme.

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea.

But the closing stanza of “The Last Leaf,” although most persons would agree that it belongs to a lower order of poetry than the stanza just quoted, is both characteristic and practically perfect of its kind:

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling.

As a prose writer Holmes is also delightful when at his best, and it is the general opinion that he is at his best in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*. The later volumes of

the series, *The Professor* and *The Poet* and *Over the Tea-cups*, will probably for a long time attract chosen readers,

The Autocrat. but many will give their allegiance unswervingly to *The Autocrat*. And why should they not swear undivided allegiance to as warm-hearted and keen-minded a talker as ever dominated a social board? The lover of truly original books, however, while he may afford not to read the rest of the table-talk series, or Holmes's biographies of Motley and Emerson, or two out of three of his experiments in fiction, *The Guardian Angel* and *A Mortal Antipathy*, can hardly afford not to read Holmes's first novel.

Elsie Venner is more the work of a scientist and a humourist than that of a trained narrator of stories, but

Elsie Venner. its technical faults as a novel are not great enough to obscure its merits as the work of a man of genius. No more amusing picture of New England village life can easily be found than the description of the party given by Mr. and Mrs. Colonel Sprowle. Unfortunately, the heroine, who gives her name to the book, has an uncanny resemblance to a rattlesnake and repels rather than fascinates some readers. Hence the novel will never be truly popular, and Holmes's reputation will probably continue to rest on his best poems, *The Autocrat*, and the memory of his gracious, benignant personality. A surer basis for fame, even if it be not a broad and massive one, could not well be desired.

James Russell Lowell was born at Cambridge, on February 22, 1819, being thus ten years younger than

Lowell's family. Holmes and sixteen years younger than Emerson. Careful study of his works reveals the fact that in many ways he showed himself to be of a later generation than that to which the great

New England group belonged; but he was united with its members through friendship, he edited *The Atlantic Monthly* to which they contributed, and he is associated with them in the minds of readers. He came of literary stock. His father was something of an author; an elder sister wrote several books; and an elder brother might have been better known as a writer had he not been eclipsed by his brilliant junior.¹



J. Keble

Lowell graduated at Harvard in 1838, not without friction with the authorities, for he was once rusticated to Concord, where he fortunately made the acquaintance of Emerson. The humour that was to be

**Early
manhood.**

so large a factor in his life and in his writings was present from the first; his class-poem satirised the Transcendentalists and other reformers who were then so much in the public eye. Soon he fell under the spell of the men he satirised, but mainly because he fell in love with a beautiful young woman who supported them enthusiastically. This was Miss Maria White, to whom Lowell addressed many poems at a time when he was ostensibly studying law. He did not practise his profession; instead, he published his first volume of verse, *A Year's Life* (1841), wrote papers on the old English dramatists—a favourite subject with him through life

¹This was Robert Traill Spence Lowell (1816-91), an Episcopalian clergyman whose ballad "The Relief of Lucknow" is still somewhat known and whose Newfoundland novel, *The New Priest in Conception Bay* (1858), gave promise of a more brilliant career than he actually achieved.

—edited a short-lived magazine, and took much interest in the cause of abolition. In 1843, he published another volume of poems, which showed improvement, although the influence of Keats was still too marked, and the next year he married Miss White, who was herself endowed with poetic talents.

The young couple, who were not amply provided with money, began life in Philadelphia, where Lowell got work on an antislavery journal. Editorials, reviews, and poems helped them to make both ends meet, and after no very long absence they took up their residence at Elmwood, Lowell's family mansion, where a small legacy made life easier for them. There in June, 1846, Lowell began publishing in *The Boston Courier* the series of political poems destined to be his greatest work, the incomparable *Biglow Papers*. In 1848, these were collected in a volume and the same year saw the publication of that amusing satire on contemporary American writers, *A Fable for Critics*, as well as of a new series of his poems, and of the romantic poem, *The Vision of Sir Launfal*. Thus before he was thirty Lowell had revealed a varied genius that gave promise of still better work. Whether this promise was entirely fulfilled in his poetry may be doubted; but there can be little question that, if his prose and his career as a diplomatist be duly weighed, Lowell's mature years amply fulfilled the promise of his early manhood.

In 1851, the Lowells, who had meanwhile suffered some domestic bereavements, sailed for Europe, hoping that the journey would help Mrs. Lowell's health. They spent abroad fifteen months which were very profitable to Lowell, but the main object of the visit was not obtained, for Mrs. Lowell died

**Successful
poems.**

**Professor
and editor.**

a year after their return. Circumstances made Lowell's lot as a widower peculiarly hard, but he bore up under it, resumed his writing, and delivered successful courses of lectures which brought him the offer of Longfellow's chair at Harvard. He visited Europe again before taking up the duties of his chair—duties which he never allowed to become onerous. He was none the less an inspiring teacher, particularly of Dante, and the preparation of his lectures

helped to make him one of the most widely cultured men of his day. In 1857, he made a happy second marriage and began his editorial labours on *The Atlantic Monthly*, which he continued to conduct until 1861. During the civil war he wrote a second series of *Biglow Papers* and began the group of patriotic odes that forms his greatest contribution to serious poetry. He also, in 1863, took part charge of the old *North American Review*, publishing in its pages many of his best critical papers, and in 1868 he collected the poems of twenty years in *Under the Willows*. That poetry was not the main concern of his later life is proved by the fact that just twenty years were to elapse before the publication of his next collection, *Heartsease and Rue* (1888).



"ELMWOOD," LOWELL'S HOME IN CAMBRIDGE.

In fact, long before the last-named volume appeared, Lowell's reputation as a prose writer had caught up with

his reputation as a poet. The critical papers and sketches collected in *Among My Books* (1870) and *My Study Windows* (1871) showed readers that

Critic and diplomat.

Lowell was altogether the most cultivated man of letters America had yet produced.

Then the patriotism that displayed itself so splendidly in the Harvard "Commemoration Ode" and in the *Memorial Poems* led him to take a small part in practical politics, and, in 1877, after declining the mission to Austria, he accepted that to Spain. Here he served until 1880, when he was transferred to Great Britain, where for five years he represented America in a most dignified and beneficial way.

He appreciated England and Englishmen to the full, but never let it be forgotten that he was proud of his own

The spokesman of democracy.

country. He did much to draw the two nations together, especially by his brilliant after-dinner speeches and his weighty memo-

rial addresses on great English writers. Perhaps, however, his most notable performance while in England was his address on "Democracy," delivered at Birmingham in 1884. American ideals had never before been more nobly expressed, but Lowell also pointed out the perils confronting popular government, and, after he returned to America, his addresses showed that he discovered in political conditions at home more occasion for misgiving than for exultation. Nevertheless he was not destined to do much practical service for political reform, for the death of his second wife had preyed upon his spirits and he was growing old. He did not resume his teaching, but wrote and travelled a little, and revised an edition of his works. He died peaceably at Elmwood on August 12, 1891, honoured throughout the English-

speaking world, perhaps more as the exponent of noble political ideals than as the wit, the poet, and the scholarly critic.

Critical opinion is still somewhat at variance with regard to the value of Lowell's poetry. To some readers

**Merits of
Lowell's
poetry.**

he is the greatest of American poets; to others he is a poet who, despite some admirable performances, did not on the whole succeed in making full use of his powers and in placing himself among the true masters of song. There can be little doubt that, if attention be confined to his best work, such as his odes, which in places fairly glow with fine emotions, or his "Pictures from Appledore," which are alive with the power of the hills and the ocean, or the prelude to *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, which is full of feeling and thought, Lowell will appear to be a poet of considerable eminence. If, in addition, his excellent command of poetic technic be duly weighed and his triumphs in humorous, satirical, and arch dialect verse illustrated in the *Biglow Papers*, especially in the first series dealing with the Mexican war, be given the high valuation they deserve, it will seem that the warmest admirers of Lowell's poetry have scarcely said too much in its favour.

But when, on the other hand, it is urged that Lowell's originality is most conspicuous in his humorous, witty,

Its defects.

and satirical poetry—in other words, in the least elevated regions of his art; that his odes are diffuse; that his serious verse as a whole lacks spontaneous passion, and fails to satisfy æsthetic and intellectual demands in a specially individual and indisputable way; and lastly, that he never, outside his humorous verse, completely shook off the influence of other poets and displayed consummate and equable mastery

of his art—it becomes apparent that the adverse critics of Lowell's poetry are not easily to be silenced. We may safely conclude, however, that *The Biglow Papers* are a masterpiece of their kind, that the odes are surpassed in nobility by no other American poems, and that there is enough good poetry in Lowell's works to give the general reader pleasure and profit while the critics are endeavouring to come to definite conclusions with regard to the questions they have raised. As long as Americans are patriots, the close of the "Commemoration Ode" will stir their hearts profoundly:

O Beautiful! my Country! ours once more!
 Smoothing thy gold of war-dishevelled hair
 O'er such sweet brows as never other wore,
 And letting thy set lips,
 Freed from wrath's pale eclipse,
 The rosy edges of their smile lay bare,
 What words divine of lover or of poet
 Could tell our love and make thee know it,
 Among the Nations bright beyond compare?
 What were our lives without thee?
 What all our lives to save thee?
 We reck not what we gave thee;
 We will not dare to doubt thee,
 But ask whatever else, and we will dare!

Much the same judgments may be passed upon Lowell's prose, although his supremacy among his countrymen as critic and scholarly man of letters is less questionable. No one has surpassed him as an academic speaker, and few, if any, Americans have written more wisely or inspiringly upon large political topics. As the buoyant, charming essayist of "My Garden Acquaintance," and similar papers, he is not easily to be matched, and if his literary essays be

Lowell's
essays.

judged only from the point of view of brilliancy and power to inspire the reader with a love of literature, there is little doubt that they take precedence, not merely over all similar performances of American writers, but over most of those written in English.

When, however, the admirers of Lowell desire to rank him among the masters of modern criticism, the question is raised and will probably continue to be raised, whether he did not often sacrifice thoroughness and impartiality to brilliancy, whether he was not frequently hasty in his judgments and careless with regard to the structure of his essays, whether he was sufficiently master of a critical method and painstaking in his investigations of literary history—whether, in short, he was not rather a delightful talker about books than an authoritative critic of them. Here again the wise reader will probably find it profitable to read or reread such an excellent essay as that on Dryden, while these questions are being settled. He will probably put down any volume of Lowell's essays with the conviction that its author was the ripest product of American culture during the nineteenth century.

The unfading fame of Lowell stands in striking contrast with the faded reputation of Nathaniel Parker Willis (1806-67). Yet Willis's career is instructive, if only in a negative way, and it probably deserves more consideration than modern critics seem willing to give it. He was born at Portland, Maine, the son of Nathaniel Willis, who founded *The Youth's Companion* in 1827. He graduated at Yale, where he obtained an astonishing reputation as a young poet and undesirable notoriety as a lover of fashion and other worldly things—New England not having entirely outgrown its

Lowell as a critic.

Willis's early career.

Puritanism. From Yale Willis went to Boston, where he engaged in editing and shocked the grave citizens by his



frivolity. Then he tried reporting in New York, and, in 1831, went to Europe, where he resided for several years, seeing much of fashionable society and sending home reports of what he saw that were eagerly read. He was accused of many social indiscretions, not always unjustly, but the reader of his *Pencillings by the Way* will readily forgive him.

On his return to America Willis entered on a career of literary prosperity that was most remarkable for the time. His stories, books of travel and description, his sacred and social poems, and his editorial labours brought him in, between 1840 and

His great popularity.

1850, when Poe could scarcely earn his bread, what was probably the largest income earned by any contemporary American writer. That his work, which was rather that of the jaunty reporter than that of the true man of letters, deserved such remuneration, or that he should have been hailed as the greatest American author, will be maintained by no one; but it is due to Willis to say that he bore his success modestly, and, as the chief literary man of New York, was often able to be of service to struggling writers. In his later years he met with reverses of health and fortune, and he bore them with a heroism which convinces the student of his life that he was not the mere social butterfly he is sometimes represented to have been.

Of his numerous prose works not one is familiar to the public of to-day, and although good pages have been extracted from most of them, there is little reason why the volumes themselves should ever be read again. The *Pencillings*, however, should not be neglected by students of English and European literature and manners for the decade from 1830 to 1840.

Such fame as Willis still possesses rests mainly on his poems dealing in easy blank verse with scriptural subjects, such as "Hagar in the Wilderness." Their poetical value is slight—Lowell called them a mixture of inspiration and water—but they naturally appealed to a pious and simple public. Schoolboys still declaim "Parrhasius," but Willis was more happily inspired when



"IDLEWILD," WILLIS'S HOME NEAR CORNWALL-
ON-THE-HUDSON.

he wrote the touching lyric "Unseen Spirits." He had a fair talent for writing humorous and social verses, and when all is said, deserved, on account of his versatility and cleverness, a portion of the reputation he obtained.

His career illustrates well the truth that the public generally has fair reasons for giving its allegiance to a writer, and the further truth that contemporary reputation is only one of the elements that enter into the final critical estimate of a writer's work. Willis was for a time a great figure in

The lesson of
his career.

American literature because he was really much more talented than the rank and file of the versifiers about whom a few words were said at the beginning of this chapter. He has ceased to be an important figure in American literature because he did not possess the sincerity, the seriousness, and the breadth and depth of popular appeal possessed by the great New England poets who were his contemporaries.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR CHAPTER VIII

A. For General and Special Works and Anthologies see the Bibliography at the end of Chapter I.

B. Helps for Further Study.—The standard *Riverside* edition of Longfellow's works, including his translations, is in eleven volumes. Samuel Longfellow's *Life and Letters* (2 vols., 1886) and *Final Memorials* (1887) of his brother were gathered in a *Life* (3 vols., 1891). See also E. S. Robertson's biography (*Great Writers*, 1887), G. R. Carpenter's (*Beacon Biographies*, 1901), and T. W. Higginson's (*American Men of Letters*, 1902). The *Riverside* edition of Whittier is in seven volumes. The authorized biography is the *Life and Letters* by S. T. Pickard (2 vols., 1894). See also W. J. Linton's biography (*Great Writers*, 1893), T. W. Higginson's (*English Men of Letters*, 1902), and George R. Carpenter's (*American Men of Letters*, 1903). The *Riverside* edition of Holmes contains thirteen volumes. See also John T. Morse's *Life and Letters* (2 vols., 1896). The poems of these three writers, and of Lowell, may be had in the excellent single volumes of the *Cambridge* edition. The *Riverside* edition of Lowell's works is in eleven volumes and there are several posthumous publications. His *Letters* were edited by C. E. Norton in 1893 (2 vols.). See the elaborate biography by Horace E. Scudder (2 vols., 1901). See also E. E. Hale's *James Russell Lowell and his Friends* (1899) and W. D. Howells's *Literary Friends and Acquaintance* (1900). For Willis, see the biography by H. A. Beers (*American Men of Letters*, 1885). Also the same writer's selections from Willis's prose (1885). There are various editions of Willis's poems, the most

complete being that of 1868. There is no complete edition of his prose, although thirteen volumes were issued in uniform style (1849-59).

For the minor versifiers of the period Griswold, Duyckinck, Stedman-Hutchinson, and Stedman in his *Anthology* will furnish abundant materials. C. F. Hoffman's complete poems were published in 1873; the poems of Dr. Parsons appeared in a definitive edition in 1893.

CHAPTER IX

POETS AND NOVELISTS (1850-1865)

THE period of fifteen years which we are about to consider was not specially propitious to literature for the reason that questions relating to slavery and States rights were uppermost in the public mind. Nevertheless at least two important authors, Mrs. Stowe and Walt Whitman, became prominent during these years, a number of new writers took their places in the ranks of literary workers, some slight progress was made in non-imaginative literature, and there were signs of a change of methods on the part of writers of fiction. On the whole, no new writers capable of rivaling the older authors on equal terms came forward with the single exception of Whitman; but the number of capable writers increased, especially in the West and South, and the literary work of the Middle States began to compare more favourably than it had done for some years with that of New England.

Moreover, higher ideals of literary art derived from the study of masters like Tennyson began to be held, and the reading public was greatly increased in numbers in consequence of the reform of the public schools and of the remarkable spread of the lyceum system, which engaged the services as lecturers of such men as Emerson, George William Curtis, and Henry Ward Beecher. The cause of literature and

**Authors of
the period.**

**The new
public.**

culture was also helped by the establishment of magazines like *Harper's*, *Putnam's*, and *The Atlantic Monthly*—periodicals conducted with more dignity and skill than their predecessors had been. These magazines gave encouragement to writers, old and young, and were themselves supported by the large new reading public; but probably none of the new influences that made in favour of literature could entirely counteract the deleterious effect produced upon the younger writers by the political and social turmoil of the years during which they got their training and first essayed authorship.

In spite of the confused character of the period there was little or no falling off in the quantity of minor poetry

New poets. produced in it, and there was apparently, on the whole, an improvement in the quality of such verse as found its way to the printers. There is, however, just as little reason to dwell on the smaller names as we discovered in the case of the twenty years preceding. Four or five poets from the Middle States, headed by Bayard Taylor, two from the South, a group of civil war poets, and then the much-discussed Whitman, who adds to the prominence of the Middle States during this period—these, and these only, seem to demand brief discussion. A few writers of humorous verse will be reserved for the next chapter (p. 198).

Bayard Taylor was born at Kennett Square, Chester County, Pennsylvania, on January 11, 1825. He came

Taylor's early travels. of Quaker and German stock and for many years lived the usual life of a farmer's lad, although always eager to read new books and see new sights. Some of his verses were printed in a newspaper when he was sixteen, and when he was nineteen he issued a volume of poems under the encouragement

of Griswold. Shortly after, inspired by the writings of Longfellow and Willis with a desire to travel, he bought



Bayard Taylor

out the rest of his time from the printer to whom he was apprenticed, and with little money and a few promises from editors to employ him as correspondent, he sailed for England in July, 1844. He remained abroad nearly two years, and on his return in 1846 his book of travels, *Views Afoot; or, Europe Seen with Knapsack and Staff*, went very speedily through six editions. In consequence,

the public never ceased to have the idea that Taylor was primarily a traveller and not a literary man.

After an attempt to conduct a newspaper in Pennsylvania, he went to New York, where he formed a connection

Busy years. with *The Tribune* that lasted for the rest of his life. He also made literary friendships,

especially with Richard Henry Stoddard, and gained some reputation by his verses, although his *El Dorado*, descriptive of the California gold-fields, was more to the public taste. Then, just as he seemed about to settle himself, the young woman to whom he was engaged developed consumption and he married her merely that she might be able to bear his name. After her death Taylor spent two years and a half abroad, chiefly in the East, adding to his laurels as a traveller and getting inspiration for what is probably his best volume of verse, *Poems of the Orient* (1854). He continued to travel, to describe his experiences in books and lectures, married

for a second time and built a mansion at his birthplace which proved a costly venture, served during the civil war as a war correspondent and also on diplomatic business, and finally settled down for a while to novel writing.

His first story, *Hannah Thurston* (1863), which satirised American provincial life in retort for criticisms passed by his Pennsylvania neighbours on Taylor's lavish way of living, was more successful than its few merits warranted. *John*

Novelist and poet.

Godfrey's Fortunes was of more value because it described Taylor's experiences among the literary people of New York during the fifties. If, however, he had not written in 1866 his good romance of early Pennsylvania life, *The Story of Kennett*, Taylor's assumption of the rôle of novelist would have been a rather dismal failure. His years of reporting had made the writing of prose too easy for him; it was mainly in the medium of verse that he succeeded in avoiding the commonplace and the slipshod and in giving expression to his genuine artistic instinct.

During the novel-writing years he did not neglect poetry; indeed, the year that saw *The Story of Kennett* published saw also *The Picture of St. John*, a poem of Italian life, which contained much polished verse and won the praise of Lowell. Seven years later *Lars*, a blank-

verse pastoral of Norway and Pennsylvania, showed so much poetic power that Taylor was justified in being



"CEDARCROFT," TAYLOR'S COUNTRY HOME NEAR KENNETT SQUARE, PA.

chagrined at the small attention bestowed on it by the public.

Meanwhile, in 1870 and 1871, he had published his admirable translation of Goethe's *Faust*—the one unqualified artistic success of his life. Much work of one sort or another followed, to the detriment of his health; ambitious attempts at dramatic poetry were received with a pathetic but not unjustified neglect; and finally, in 1878, the public recognition he had craved came to him almost too late. His services as a translator and student of German literature were rewarded by his appointment as minister to Germany. But he had scarcely entered upon his duties when he died, sitting in his library in Berlin, on December 19, 1878.

It is becoming more and more obvious that posterity is unlikely to give Taylor, the poet, much greater praise than he received from his contemporaries.

Taylor's writings.

His books of travel, while not unworthy of being read, have served their purpose; only *The Story of Kennett* has been saved from the mass of his fiction; his dramatic poems are seldom glanced at; and his miscellaneous writings are almost totally neglected. His translation of *Faust* and his collected poems alone survive, and the latter are read in their entirety by only a few persons here and there who have made a sort of cult of his poetry. Yet Taylor was a true poet not surpassed by any of his contemporaries in careful workmanship, especially in mellifluous versification. He was a poetic artist who lacked a sufficiently high mental endowment to enable him to treat the ambitious themes his artistic instincts forced him to attempt. He found no small, specific task to do for his countrymen, and ranged the world for subjects and for inspiration. He never

shook off the influence of his masters, Bryant, Shelley, and Tennyson. Hence it seems likely that he will never be ranked higher than as an interesting case of a poet who is perhaps a little more than minor yet scarcely important. No reader who cares for poetry, however, will fail to be thankful for the beautiful lyrics "Daughter of Egypt" and the "Bedouin Song," which occur in *Poems of the Orient*; and the idyll "Hylas," the ballad "Song of the Camp," the "Home Pastorals" descriptive of Pennsylvania, and passages from the longer poems ought to keep the public from remembering Taylor merely as a translator and a traveller. In the sphere of the singing lyric no other American has clearly surpassed Taylor's success in the "Bedouin Song," the first stanza of which will indicate the quality of the whole:

From the Desert I come to thee
 On a stallion shod with fire;
 And the winds are left behind
 In the speed of my desire.
 Under thy window I stand,
 And the midnight hears my cry;
 I love thee, I love but thee,
 With a love that shall not die
 Till the sun grows cold,
 And the stars are old,
 And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!

Taylor's name at once suggests that of Richard Henry Stoddard (1825-1903), who was only a few months his junior, but survived him so long that, while the former seems to belong with the past worthies of our literature, the latter seems to be one of ourselves whom it is difficult to judge with the proper impartiality. Both men worshipped beauty

Stoddard's
 life.

as only artists can, thus belonging rather with Poe than with the New England group. But neither made Poe his master, Taylor owing more to Shelley and Stoddard to Keats. Stoddard, the son of a sea captain, was born at Hingham, Massachusetts. He was early taken to New York city, was educated in the public schools there, and for some years worked in an iron foundry. Being in bad health and having already issued a volume of poems, he devoted himself to literature after the year



R. H. Stoddard

1849, the success of his friend Taylor acting as a spur to his ambitions. He contributed to magazines, issued another volume of poems, which met with much favour, and made friends with the leading authors of the country, including Hawthorne. In 1852, he married Miss Elizabeth Barstow, herself a writer of verse and later somewhat known as a novelist. Then, through Hawthorne's help, he

secured a position in the New York Custom-House which he held until 1870. From 1860 to his death he was connected with one or another of the New York newspapers as literary editor. He also edited numerous volumes of English and American classics, wrote many critical essays, recited poems—in short, led a very busy life until just before his death.

The King's Bell, a narrative poem published in 1863, was his most ambitious effort, but two years later, in his excellent ode on Lincoln, he reached his highwater mark. He wrote this in the stanza

His poetry.

already made famous by the fine "Horatian Ode" on Oliver Cromwell, generally attributed to Andrew Marvell. The challenge was hardy and not altogether happy, but the resulting poem was a valuable addition to our literature. Like Taylor, Stoddard wrote a collection of Oriental poems, *The Book of the East*; but, like his friend again, he is likely to live, not by his miscellaneous writings or his elaborate efforts, but by a few poems—in his case by little snatches of exquisitely turned song such as that entitled "Birds," in which he complains that, just as birds will not enter a cage hung out for them, so the thoughts that people his brain "will not fold their pinions in the little cage of song."

Two other friends of Bayard Taylor were the Pennsylvania poets, Thomas Buchanan Read (1822-72) and

**Read and
Story.**

George Henry Boker (1823-90). Both possessed decided talents, yet neither succeeded in making the mark that might have been expected of him. Read, after an adventurous youth in which he tried various means of livelihood, divided his energies between painting and poetry. In this division of his forces he reminds us of his contemporary, William Wetmore Story (1819-95) of Massachusetts, son of the jurist Joseph Story, and a sculptor and poet of considerable ability. Both with more concentration might have accomplished more. Read wrote numerous narrative poems, once praised but now forgotten, and many



Thomas Buchanan Read

shorter pieces, two of which have preserved his name. One is the war lyric "Sheridan's Ride," the other is the lovely set of stanzas entitled "Drifting," which have caught not a little of the charm of Neapolitan scenery.

Boker has good poems to his credit, such as his ballad "The Rose of Granada," and a rather long piece, "The

Boker. Ivory Carver;" but these have probably fewer admirers than Read's small poetic legacy. Boker was, however, more highly endowed as a poet, for he may fairly be said to have surpassed all the



Geo. H. Boker

other Americans who have attempted the poetic drama. At the age of twenty-four he wrote a tragedy which two years later had a good run in London, and he continued for several years to cast his work into the dramatic mould. His chief success was *Francesca da Rimini*, which still keeps the stage and has more dramatic merit than some later attempts to deal with the same

fascinating theme. But when he published his plays and poems in two volumes, in 1856, Boker found comparatively few readers, nor did his later books achieve popularity. He obtained diplomatic honours, the missions to Turkey and Russia, critics spoke well of his work, but the public denied him a place among the chief writers of his time. The public was probably right. Boker had used his powers to imitate a by-gone form of art, the Elizabethan drama, and he had treated foreign themes

having no special interest for his country or his age. His one play that survives was on a theme of universal interest, consecrated by Dante's immortal art. But while Boker's works are not likely to mean more to the future than they have meant to the past, he should be remembered as a conscientious writer of more than ordinary powers.

Two poets of South Carolina, Paul Hamilton Hayne (1830-86)

Hayne, Tim- and Henry Timrod
rod and (1829-67), may be
Holland. mentioned here be-

cause like Boker and Taylor

they were men of true poetic powers which were never fully recognised by their countrymen. Such a writer as

Dr. Josiah Gilbert Holland (1819-81), long known as the editor of *Scribner's Monthly* and a popular novelist and poet, could touch the hearts of thousands by lengthy poems like *Bitter-Sweet* and *Katrina*, quite devoid of poetic distinction, while poets of genuine, if limited artistic powers, waited vainly for wide recognition. Such has, however, long been the way

of the world, nor can the writer who wins his thousands of readers be lacking in some sort of power



Paul H. Hayne.



Henry Timrod

of which the neglected artist is more or less destitute.

Whether Hayne and Timrod in a different age and environment would have won popularity is doubtful, but it is certain that circumstances were against them. They formed part of Simms's brilliant coterie in Charleston just before the civil war, and there Hayne edited *Russell's Magazine*, a periodical by no means discreditable to its period and section. The



war sadly thwarted their careers. Shortly after it Timrod died in poverty, while Hayne had to make a brave struggle through the twenty years that were left to him. Timrod's verse, comparatively small in amount, is marked by charm even when immature, and is occasionally, as in the stanzas entitled "Charleston" and in those entitled "At Magnolia Cemetery," infused with a passion and power that are not often displayed. Hayne's verse is more considerable in quantity and more equable in quality; his sonnets and his poems of nature in her Southern phases could have been written only by a poet trained to use his poetic heritage of culture and his individual and considerable æsthetic and intellectual powers.

Nearly all the poets we have just treated wrote martial lyrics of merit during the great struggle that divided the sections, and their example was followed by a host of writers, only a few of whom need be named. Verse produced under such storm

Civil war
poets.

and stress must in most cases prove ephemeral, but sometimes it catches and retains the intensity of the passion or the poignancy of the pathos accompanying the events that inspire it. Such is the case with the ringing lyric "Maryland, My Maryland" by James Rider Randall, the best of the Southern war poems, as well as with Mrs. Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and Mrs. Ethelinda Beers's "All Quiet Along the Potomac." Other poems of merit may be read in the anthologies, and the names of the writers will long be cherished in their respective sections. If Randall's spirited poem is the most truly lyrical burst of passion to be credited to the struggle, honours are made easy for the sections and for the two arms of the service by the fact that the most vivid descriptive poems are probably "The River Fight" and "The Bay Fight," in which Henry Howard Brownell of Connecticut (1820-72), a true if somewhat uneven poet, described the great naval engagements that resulted in the capture of New Orleans and Mobile.

The only one of the writers dealt with in the present chapter whose importance can be said to be increasing

Whitman's
early life.

year by year is Walter or, as he came to be called, Walt Whitman, who was born at West Hills, Huntington township, Long Island, on May 31, 1819. He was only a few months younger than Lowell, yet he became known as a writer several years



Walt. Whitman

later than Bayard Taylor. His family was respectable but not able to give him many advantages of education. He got some schooling, however, and in his rambles about Long Island learned to love nature. At thirteen he was following the trade of printing, when he was seventeen he was teaching school, at twenty editing a newspaper. Then he printed and wrote for newspapers in New York and Brooklyn during about a dozen years, one of his main diversions being to mix with the masses of the people. He talked to them on ferry-boats, visited them in factories, and gained information about their thoughts and habits that was later of much service to his poetry. When he was thirty, he extended his observations by journeying through the West and Southwest. Then he built and sold houses in Brooklyn, but all the while he was reading and attempting to express his thoughts, first in conventional, later in more or less original literary forms.

In 1855, he helped to print a small book of his verses—the famous *Leaves of Grass*, which by successive additions grew to be a large volume before he died.

**Leaves of
Grass.**

The book had no sale, but most of the reviewers took the trouble to express uncompimentary opinions about it. In form and substance alike it seemed to be shockingly crude and absurd and even immoral. It was not so original as it appeared to be; for others had experimented in unfettered verse, and in his way Whitman was affected by the vague spiritual aspirations of the Transcendentalists, some of whom—notably Emerson, Alcott and Thoreau—recognised their kinship with the new poet. But in essence Whitman was an original force in letters, because he represented the many-sided, huge, crude, buoyant, sound-hearted America

of his day, giving voice to its aspirations, yet being sufficiently separated from the masses to form and promulgate a philosophy of democracy and a religion of blended egoism and socialism.

In so far as he gloried in nature, in his country and people, in liberty in all its forms, Whitman stood on solid ground, as the growth of his fame has proved. **Whitman's strength and weakness.** In so far as he cherished hopes of securing readers among the masses and of becoming their leader and spokesman, he counted without his host, for his main supporters have been people of culture and advanced views. He also laboured under a delusion when he thought it possible for the present to cut loose in many respects from what he regarded as the effete and cramping past, especially that of European tradition. He himself, even in his crudest verse, was constantly showing his indebtedness to the culture he thought outworn. For example, there was little that was new in his glorification of the vigour and beauty of the human form.

Whitman paid little attention to his carping reviewers, and, in 1856, issued an expanded edition of the *Leaves* containing thirty-two poems, twenty of them new. **Whitman's defiance of criticism.** This actually suggested to some people the idea of prosecuting the author in the courts. Undeterred he went on writing and, in 1860, issued a still larger edition containing new poems that were more objectionable to most readers than any he had previously written. He believed that he was merely frank, whereas nearly every one else thought him immoral. The truth seems to be that he was, at worst, only disgustingly coarse in certain passages, and that perhaps, if the outcry had been less great against his entire work, he might

possibly have seen the futility, if not the impropriety, of his offences against public taste.

The civil war was soon to give him an opportunity to show a very sound side of his nature. He became an army nurse and gave comfort to thousands of sick and wounded soldiers. This episode is the most inspiring feature of his life, and it may also be said that the war marked a turning point in his writings. His newspaper correspondence and his private letters gave vivid pictures of the horrors of the conflict and served as a basis for his work in prose. His volume of poems, *Drum-Taps*, issued soon after the return of peace, not only could not be charged with being egoistic and coarse, but could be praised for admirable descriptive passages and for noble lyric utterances, especially for those commemorating Lincoln. "O Captain, My Captain," and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" revealed Whitman as a true poet to thousands who had thought him either mad or vile.

About this time he made friends also on account of the petty persecution to which he was subjected when he was dismissed from the Department of the Interior because of the objectionable passages in the *Leaves*, in spite of the fact that the book had been out of print for some years. He received a clerkship in another department and remained in Washington until the winter of 1873, when he suffered a stroke of paralysis. Then he removed to Camden, New Jersey, where he resided until his death on March 26, 1892. For a time he was in great want, but friends gathered round him, there was a larger demand for his books, his health improved so that he was able to write and to take occa-

sional journeys, and on the whole his old age was a cheerful and benignant one.

During his later years Whitman's writings became less eccentric in form and substance, and more and more readers began to acknowledge the emotional and descriptive power of his verse, while some discovered in his chief prose works, *Specimen Days* and *Democratic Vistas*, a depth and range of thought and a command of impassioned language rare in any period of literature. That a majority of readers still looked upon him with suspicion and did not take the trouble to read him, except perhaps in his least creditable passages, can scarcely be denied; that even to-day he is subjected to much harsh and not a little stupid censure is equally true; but it is also plain that for nearly forty years some of the best foreign and native critics have been proud to be his champions, that he has drawn to himself many devoted and often overzealous admirers, and that his eminence in American literature is yearly being less and less questioned.

We are entirely too near Whitman to be able to judge his works impartially, but it is at least clear that no one save rather young readers need hold aloof from the prose works or from selections that have been made from the poems. It is equally clear that no one should venture to be dogmatic about the man and his writings—the two are in fact almost one, the *Leaves* being Whitman's record of his spiritual and mental life—or should express decided opinions that are not based upon a careful study of his complete works. Whether Whitman was large or merely chaotic, whether he was profound or shallow, whether or not he is worthy to rank among the great poets and spiritual teachers of

**Growth of
his fame.**

**Difficulty of
criticising
Whitman.**

the world, whether his verse is really poetry at all—these and kindred questions cannot be fully discussed here for lack of space and for other reasons, and should not be discussed anywhere without patience and candour.

It must suffice to say that Whitman's early verses contain much jargon, much unpoetical cataloguing of things that seem commonplace, much literary affectation, and some

Merits and defects. coarse passages, yet at the same time please many readers by their free rhythm, their

intimate knowledge of nature and men, their emotional sincerity and strength, and their lack of conventionality. The later poems are, on the whole, rather free from what many readers consider Whitman's defects and also exhibit in a less striking degree what his admirers deem his excellences. Perhaps they are chiefly notable because they contain scores of short bits of description presenting aspects of nature in a very strong and clear fashion. If to these descriptive poems we add the descriptive prose passages, we are warranted in claiming that, even if Whitman's friends and foes never succeed in settling their differences, there is enough indisputably good work to be culled from his volumes to entitle him to a high place among American authors. But it is not likely that his fame will be based on any one section of his work. His tributes to Lincoln, his speculations on democracy, early poems like "Starting from Paumanok," later ones like "Passage to India," impressive "chants" like "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking"—scores of varied achievements like these and many matters that would require a book for their discussion will be considered by the readers and critics of more than one generation before the place of "the good gray poet"¹

¹ A name often applied to Whitman, who turned grey rather early.

among American writers will be determined with fair accuracy. To imagine, however, that the author of the following lines can be summarily dismissed from the ranks of the poets on the score of his "barbaric yawps" ought to become less and less possible year by year:

Once Paumanok,
When the lilac-scent was in the air and fifth month grass was
growing,
Up the seashore in some briers,
Two feathered guests from Alabama, two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,
And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,
And every day the she-bird crouched on her nest, silent, with
bright eyes,
And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never dis-
turbng them,
Cautiously, peering, absorbing, translating.

(From "*Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*.")

It has already been said that between 1850 and 1865 the methods of the writers of fiction showed some change.

New writers of fiction. It was the period of Hawthorne's great romances, but on the whole, the vogue of the romantic school steadily declined. Cooper's last, and perhaps worst, book was published in 1850; his followers either ceased writing romances or found it more difficult to hold their old readers and to secure fresh ones. Occasionally a new writer, like John Esten Cooke of Virginia, a brother of Philip Cooke the poet and a nephew of Kennedy the romancer, would produce a romance that showed promise. Cooke's *Virginia Comedians* (1854) was such a book; but in less than a generation its author knew that he had failed to succeed because he had been trained in the methods of a school rapidly losing its prestige.

The American public of the fifties had had enough of stories of Indians and sailors who underwent remarkable adventures, as well as of more conventional stories of love and mystery. Readers turned to new writers who gave them gentle sentiment, such as Donald G. Mitchell and George William Curtis, or to those who portrayed commonplace life and character in a piously didactic way, such as Miss Susan Warner and Miss Maria S. Cummins. This fact was due not merely to a natural craving for change, but to the fact that fiction was no longer neglected by the masses of the people, who nevertheless wished it to stir their sentiments and emotions in what they deemed a wholesome way, and also to deal with characters and situations familiar enough to be understood.

The sentimental and emotional phases of the fiction they enjoyed are now subject either to neglect or to ridicule. It is almost impossible, for example, to understand how Miss Warner's mediocre story, *The Wide, Wide World*, ever held readers, yet this lachrymose account of a young girl's life, which was published in the same year with Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*, reached tens of thousands of readers in America and Europe to whom the great romance was scarcely even a name. So it is difficult for some readers to enjoy as their fathers did the sentimental *Reveries of a Bachelor* of "Ik Marvel," as Donald G. Mitchell called himself, which appeared in 1850 along with the two books just named. Curtis's *Prue and I* also seems old-fashioned, but these books, as well as Miss Cummins's *The Lamplighter*, are still read by not a few persons.

On the other hand, if the sentiment and the didacticism

that pleased readers half a century ago are more or less avoided by popular writers of fiction to-day, these authors have profited from the demand of the elder generation that fiction should deal with characters and situations of real life.

**Influence on
later fiction.**

Realistic fiction, under the inspiration of French and Russian writers, has become something much more artistic than it was in the fifties, but even then it furnished a relief from high-flying romance. The sentiment and didacticism were also presented somewhat more delicately and with less primness than they had been a generation before. We conclude then, that, although the period brought forward only one very distinguished writer of fiction, Mrs. Stowe, it was not without importance as a stage in the art of story-telling. There were also two authors besides Mrs. Stowe worthy of our attention—Theodore Winthrop and FitzJames O'Brien—and Curtis and Mitchell did work in other fields of literature that won them high consideration from their contemporaries.¹

Harriet Beecher was born at Litchfield, Connecticut, on June 14, 1811. She was the sixth child of the Rev.

**Mrs. Stowe's
early life.** Lyman Beecher, who was noted in his day as a preacher and a staunch upholder of Congregationalism against Unitarianism. Her

brother was the famous clergyman, orator and writer, Henry Ward Beecher; her sister Catherine was a pioneer worker for the education of women. Harriet was a precocious child who read more and wrote better than was usual even in her day, when children were pushed forward

¹ For Curtis, see p 213. Mr. Mitchell is fortunately still living in 1904, at the age of eighty-two. Among his best-known books since the *Reveries* may be named *Dream Life* (1852), *My Farm of Edgewood* (1863) and *English Lands, Letters, and Kings* (1889).

in a way not now thought salutary. She was educated at her sister Catherine's school at Hartford and taught there. In 1832, the school was moved to Cincinnati, where Dr. Beecher had become the head of a new theological seminary. Here Harriet had opportunities to study the condition of the slaves in the adjoining State of Kentucky. Here also, in 1836, she made what was destined to be an exceptionally happy marriage with the Rev. Calvin E. Stowe, a learned Oriental scholar.

The thirteen years that followed were devoted mainly to domestic duties, although the husband encouraged his wife in her bent for writing. In 1849, she published a volume of sketches of New England life entitled *The Mayflower*—a prelude to an important section of her fiction. Then, Mr. Stowe having accepted a call to Bowdoin College, the family removed to Brunswick, Maine,

Uncle Tom's Cabin.



H B Stowe

and there Mrs. Stowe wrote her greatest book. The first chapter of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was sent to *The New Era* of Washington in April, 1851. When it was published in book form the next year, three thousand copies were sold the day it appeared. In a few years hundreds of thousands of copies had been read by high and low in America and

England, and it had been translated into numerous languages. It had also been dramatized, and in one form or another it has since held the stage. Its author was bitterly assailed in the South but vigorously upheld else-

where, and her book was certainly influential in precipitating the civil war. In 1853, she went abroad to recuperate and was received with enthusiasm. Three years later her second antislavery story, *Dred, a Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*, added to the effects produced by *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, but despite good features was an inferior book to that powerful purpose-novel.

Mrs. Stowe's next work was one to which Lowell and other contemporary critics gave higher praise than to

Uncle Tom's Cabin. This was *The Minister's Wooing*, begun in *The Atlantic Monthly* in

**Her best
books.**

1858—an excellent story of colonial life in New England. Although not without plain defects, it is probably as a work of art superior to Mrs. Stowe's world-famous story, which shows haste in composition and not a little ignorance of Southern life; but it has not the intensity of emotional appeal that made the antislavery book one of the most memorable productions in the history of literature. This is equally or more true of all her many subsequent volumes—even of *Old Town Folks* (1869), which is sometimes cited as her best work and is certainly full of humour and of excellent descriptions of New England life. Mrs. Stowe was a gifted writer who, in the last-named book, profited from the lessons taught by the modern realists; but she had not the artistic skill or the intellectual power requisite to the production of enduring masterpieces. Once, and once only, did she display the requisite emotional power, and, fortunately for her, circumstances furnished her with a theme of world-wide interest. Thus she was enabled, almost at the beginning of her career, to write—not a great work of literary art—but what it would be hypercritical not to term a great book.

The rest of her career is interesting, but not to be dwelt on here. After the civil war she spent much of her time in Florida and showed great sympathy for those who had suffered from the war. She survived her husband ten years, in a state of slow decline, and died on July 1, 1896, leaving behind her the record of a beautiful domestic life, of public services marked by modest dignity, and of a very creditable literary career culminating in one work of international fame. The books that have been named, with a few others, such as *The Pearl of Orr's Island*, are still read with pleasure by many persons, and of her numerous publications only one—an unfortunate book dealing with the matrimonial troubles of Lord and Lady Byron—needs the least apology from her admirers. But the world seems to have determined to remember Mrs. Stowe as the woman who wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, rather than as a rival of Jane Austen and George Eliot.

**Her later
career.**

Less remembered than Mrs. Stowe, Theodore Winthrop (1828–61) and FitzJames O'Brien (1828–62) are, nevertheless, sufficiently interesting as men and as writers not to be forgotten. The first was a native of Connecticut and a member of the historic Winthrop family. He was well educated, travelled widely, especially in Central America and in our Western States and Territories, made a beginning at law, and then devoted himself to writing. He had succeeded in getting but little published when the civil war broke out. He went at once to the front with the Seventh Regiment of New York and was killed in the battle of Great Bethel. An article which he wrote for *The Atlantic Monthly*, describing his all too brief military experiences, drew attention to him, and the pathos of his death and the devotion

**Theodore
Winthrop.**



Edgar Poe

of friends like George William Curtis helped to give some vogue to his books, five of which were published during



Theodor Winthrop

the war. Three of these were novels which have occasionally been highly praised. The best is *John Brent* (1863), which is full of the free, manly spirit of the West and tells a vigorous, readable story. Winthrop's reputation has scarcely maintained itself, but he was clearly a writer of ability, who, if he had not lived in a transitional and confused period, might have accomplished something of permanent value.

Fitz-James O'Brien was another victim of circumstances, but he was also the

**O'Brien's
life.**

victim of his own
habits. He was

born in County Limerick, Ireland, ran through his property, tried journalism in London, and made a fresh start in New York. He cut a dashing figure in society for a while, made something of a literary sensation by publishing in *The Atlantic Monthly* his strikingly imaginative tales "The Diamond Lens," and

"The Wonder-Smith," and drew around him a coterie of talented young men over whose Bohemian revels he



Fitz-James O'Brien

presided with good humour and brilliancy. The war put an end to this not altogether creditable way of using his many gifts, and O'Brien went to the front, where he won high praise for his bravery. A wound in a cavalry skirmish led to a long period of suffering ended only by his death.

Nearly twenty years later, one of his friends, the well-known poet and critic, Mr. William Winter, published a volume of O'Brien's selected poems and tales which has apparently never received the attention it deserves. The poems, some of which are strongly imaginative, others charming and clever, show that O'Brien was a true, although perhaps only an occasional, poet. The tales, in which he reveals himself as a follower of Hawthorne and Poe, are at least strikingly ingenious—so much so that a few of them may be pronounced impressive. The best-known is "The Diamond Lens," which describes how a mad microscopist saw a beautiful sylph in a drop of water and became infatuated with her. Equally original is the strange "What Was It?" which with "The Wonder-Smith" and several other stories ought to find readers among the admirers of those two greatest American writers of tales, whose success encouraged the lesser but still creditable authors that followed them.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR CHAPTER IX

A. For General and Special Works and Anthologies, see the Bibliography at the end of Chapter I.

B. Helps for Further Study.—Bayard Taylor's poems, dramas, translation of *Faust*, and his *Life and Letters*, edited by Marie Hansen Taylor and H. E. Scudder (2 vols., 1884), may be had in a uniform edition of six volumes. For his travels,

romances, etc., one must depend on older editions, save for a recent edition of *The Story of Kennett* (1903). See also the biography by A. H. Smyth (*American Men of Letters*, 1896). R. H. Stoddard's *Recollections* were edited by Riply Hitchcock in 1903. Hayne's poems were collected in 1882; Timrod's in 1873 and 1899. For Whitman, the editions of the *Leaves* and the complete *Prose Works* (both 1898) have been superseded by an elaborate edition (1902). The authorized life is that by Dr. R. M. Bucke (1883). See also the critical volumes by J. A. Symonds (1893), John Burroughs (1896), W. N. Guthrie (1897), and the miscellaneous collection entitled *In re Walt Whitman* (1893). Miss Warner's *Wide, Wide World* and Miss Cummins's *Lamplighter* circulate in cheap editions. The *Riverside* edition of Mrs. Stowe's works, including Mrs. Annie Fields's volume of her *Life and Letters* (1897), comprises seventeen volumes. For story see the biography by Henry James (1903).

CHAPTER X

MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS (1830-1865)

WE have examined in the four preceding chapters the work of the chief imaginative writers in prose and verse who had attained prominence before the close of the civil war. Side by side with them men of ability were laying the foundations of American scholarship in the various languages and literatures, in history, and in other studies, and were embodying the results of their work in books sufficiently literary in quality to warrant at least a brief mention in a history of American literature. One important branch of literature reached its height during this period—the years from 1830 to 1865 were the golden age of American oratory. Another humbler but equally characteristic branch of our literature also flourished at the same time—the literature of humour. For convenience, after saying a word about the critics, we may treat these writers under the three heads of the humorists, the historians, and the publicists.

Lack of space forbids more than the briefest mention of the critics who share with Poe, Margaret Fuller and Lowell the credit of having taught the American public both to exact better work from native writers and to be less subservient to foreign standards of taste. Of these probably the most influential was Edwin Percy Whipple (1819–86) of Massa-

Critics.

chusetts, well known as a lecturer, reviewer and essayist. The most acute was the Shakespearian editor and writer on linguistic topics, Richard Grant White (1821-85) of New York, whose books, although dogmatic and in many respects untrustworthy in the light of modern scholarship, were on the whole excellent for their period.

One of the earliest Americans to deal with politics in broadly

humorous newspaper
Political articles was Seba
humorists.

Smith (1792-1868), a native of Maine. In January, 1830, he began to write a series of letters on local politics, purporting to come from the pen of "Major Jack Down-

ing of Downingville." The "Major" made use of "Down East" dialect and was so funny that his letters were copied by newspapers throughout the country. His creator then gave him a wider sphere of usefulness by making him a confidential adviser of President Andrew Jackson, *alias* "Old Hickory." A rival series of letters was begun in New York, and it may be fairly asserted that "Major Jack

Downing" is the progenitor of most of the comic characters who have commented on American politics down to



E. P. Whipple



Rich. Grant White

"Mr. Dooley." His letters were eclipsed during the Mexican War by the *Biglow Papers*, yet even Lowell was probably not innocent of obligations to his amusing forerunner. During the civil war also the letters of "Rev. Petroleum V. Nasby," written by David Ross Locke (1833-88) of Ohio, surpassed in imaginative power those of Seba Smith, but the latter deserves the credit due to a pioneer. Neither Smith, nor Locke, nor Robert Henry Newell of New York ("Orpheus C. Kerr"), nor Charles Henry Smith of Georgia ("Bill Arp") will ever be widely read again; but the general reader may as well remember that the modern political humorist over whose skits he laughs had predecessors and will have successors every whit as amusing to their respective publics.

A small group of somewhat coarse but undeniably racy humorists was furnished with materials by the turbulent, unsettled States of the Southwest
Southwestern humorists. —notably parts of Georgia and Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi. It was a period of emigration into rich cotton fields, of quarrels over land titles fomented by legal pettifoggers, of wild gambling and other excitements. Classes were mixed much as they were later on the Pacific coast, and in both cases the contrast between types of character and between civilised and semi-civilised society supplied those incongruities which stimulate the faculty of the humorist.

At least four of these Southwestern writers—who from the nature of their creations might almost be discussed as purveyors of fiction—deserve to be remembered. They are Judge Augustus Baldwin
Four Southwestern humorists. Longstreet (1790-1870), author of *Georgia Scenes*, William Tappan Thompson, author of *Major Jones's Courtship*, Johnson J. Hooper, author of the *Ad-*

ventures of Captain Simon Suggs, and Judge Joseph G. Baldwin (1815-64), author of *Flush Times in Alabama and Mississippi*. The last-named book is easily the best of the group from the point of view of literary merit, but all are well worth a glance, not merely for their humour, but for the descriptions they give of phases of life that will never be witnessed again. The humorists themselves are also worthy of more attention than can be given them here. They represent well the energy and versatility characteristic of the Americans of Jackson's *régime*—indeed, the fact that the typical American humorist has travelled far and wide and earned his living in many callings partly explains his ability to make fun of and to amuse his countrymen.

A full history of American humour would include scores of names once fairly current but now half or entirely for-

**Whimsical
humorists.**

gotten, and among these would be reckoned such writers of humorous verse as John Godfrey Saxe (1816-87) of Vermont and such exploiters of vulgarities and blunders as Benjamin P. Shillaber, the creator of the amusing "Mrs. Partington," whose misuse of her native tongue delighted readers of two generations ago. Much the ablest of these whimsical humorists were Captain

George Horatio Derby (1823-61), better known as "John Phoenix," Henry Wheeler Shaw (1818-85), famous as "Josh Billings," and Charles Farrar Browne (1834-67), the inimitable "Artemus Ward."



John G. Saxe

Derby was an army officer whose burlesques, especially those contained in *Phœnixiana*, introduced the extravagant humour of the Pacific coast to the more staid inhabitants of the East, some of whom have never been able to appreciate his fantastic sallies, such as his ingenious proposal for a new system of English grammar. Shaw, after trying many

**John Phœnix
and Josh
Billings.**



Henry W. Shaw

trades, including that of the auctioneer, adopted the trick of phonetic spelling, and persuaded people to read his "Essa on the Muel." Then he sprang into prominence as a lecturer and a writer of aphorisms as pithy as they were amusing. His *Farmers' Almanax* were very successful, and it may be maintained with confidence that more serious philosophers have

been far less wise than "Josh Billings."

But the most celebrated of all these forerunners of "Mark Twain" was Charles Farrar Browne—the only one

**Artemus
Ward.**

who succeeded in thoroughly amusing England as well as America. At first he led a wandering life as a printer and contributed to newspapers; but at last, assuming the character of "A. Ward, Showman," he made himself famous both as a writer and as a lecturer. In 1862, he gathered materials for his comic lecture on Mormonism. Two years later he broke down from consumption, but rallied and, in 1866, visited England, where his oddities of manner and his quaint wit won him perhaps even warmer friends than

he had made at home. He grew weaker, however, and died at Southampton before he could board the ship that was to bring him back. His works have been collected, but the lapse of a generation has made many readers wonder what their fathers found so amusing in them. A careful examination will reveal the presence of whimsical rather than of broad, hearty humour; a little thought will serve to convince us that much of Browne's fame depended upon the droll manner in which he said his witty things. The wit, like the orator, is fortunate if a modest portion of his fame survives; the humorist is fortunate if change of public taste does not render him old-fashioned or jejune. Old-fashioned and somewhat jejune, or else too crude and coarse, many of our early humorists must perforce appear to readers of the present day; but this fact scarcely warrants their being treated with neglect or contempt by persons interested in the evolution of American literature.

We have seen that from the planting of the colonies interest was at no time entirely diverted from local history, but we have found few historical works worth chronicling in a history of literature.

Historians of the United States.

Irving may be properly considered the first American to bring to the writing of history and biography the methods and training of a genuine man of letters, but Irving chose in the main foreign themes and was not a laborious scholar and investigator. His influence was great, however, upon the important group of historians, headed by Prescott and Motley, who took interest in remote rather than in recent events, and found their subjects outside their own country. He influenced also the group headed by Sparks and Bancroft, whose chief concern was with the evolution of the United States. The

latter were more affected, however, by the growth of the patriotic spirit that followed the War of 1812, by the development of manufacturing, by the opening of the West, and by the sentimental interest that attached to the Revolution after the last of its leaders had passed away.

Among the first Americans to feel the effects of this spirit was Jared Sparks (1789-1866) of Massachusetts.

Jared Sparks. While Edward Everett and Daniel Webster were delivering orations commemorative of the founders of the Republic, Sparks was collecting their correspondence and writing their biographies. He was



Jared Sparks

an important man in many ways, filling, among other positions, that of president of Harvard College; but his chief service was rendered as a stimulator of interest in American history and as a collector of documents. As editor of the works of Washington, Franklin and other patriots, he did not show himself to be an accurate and model scholar, but he was a most useful pioneer.

Better known than Sparks and coming nearer to our ideal of a great historian, though falling far short of it in

**Bancroft's
career.**

many respects, is George Bancroft (1800-91), also of Massachusetts. He was one of the first Americans to study in Germany and to gain thorough acquaintance with the methods of European scholars. He began his career as a school teacher,

but after the very favourable reception of the first volume of his *History of the United States* in 1834, he was drawn into politics. He filled high positions—was Secretary of the Navy under Polk and Minister to England, and many years later Minister to Germany—yet he did not cease to labour on his history.

On the contrary, he used the opportunities furnished by his wide knowledge of persons and places to secure large

masses of historical documents

the use of which added greatly to the value of his later volumes. He published slowly, and when, in 1882, he issued his twelfth and last volume, he had not passed beyond the period of the formation of the Constitution. He devoted the rest of his life to revising his great work, which, in its inception, had been far too rhetorical, and full of praise for all things American and demo-

cratic. Even in its revised form his *History* is found by many readers to be more useful than delightful; but posterity will probably be grateful to him, even if it is compelled to discount the high admiration expressed for him by most of his contemporaries.

It should be remarked in this connection that Bancroft was not without rivals and opponents. For example, Richard Hildreth, of Massachusetts, published an elaborate and useful *History of the United States*, which was



anything but too favourable to American democracy. Other historians of the United States or of special States and sections must be passed over, but attention should be drawn to the fact that from the earliest to the latest times one commonwealth, Massachusetts, has been more prolific of distinguished historians and histories than all the other States combined. This is not strange when we remember that Boston and Cambridge have long been the residences of men possessing the wealth and culture necessary to those who devote themselves to research in rare books and documents, and that nowhere else in America were such library facilities to be obtained.

William Hickling Prescott (1796-1859), of Massachusetts, was the first native of that State to rival Irving as

a writer of picturesque history. The story of the difficulties he overcame is familiar.

While at Harvard he was accidentally struck in one eye and lost the sight of it, the other being soon affected sympathetically. Undeterred by his misfortune, he resolved to be a historian and worked heroically to that end. He was read to for hours at a time, had voluminous notes taken, and learned to use a cumbrous writing machine. He chose Spanish history as his field, and, in 1837, issued his *Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella*.

The three volumes were a great success owing to the interesting nature of the theme and to the historian's art



W. H. Prescott

Massachusetts, the home of historians.

Prescott's heroism.

and attractive style. Seven years later he published his best known and probably his most excellent work —the delightful *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, which not a few readers have found as interesting as fiction. Late archæological researches have shown that in some important respects it is fiction, since Prescott's accounts of the Aztec state were necessarily based on the highly coloured and erroneous reports of the Spanish conquerors, who had a greater sense for romance than for fact. *The Conquest of Peru* was a natural sequel; then Prescott set to work on an elaborate *History of the Reign of Philip II* which he did not live to finish, a fact rendered less regrettable than might at first be supposed, by his comparative lack of aptitude for dealing with political complications.

Prescott was rather a conscious, classical artist and a brilliant master of descriptive history than a student of characters and movements. This is only to say that he does not quite come up to the standards of more or less scientific research demanded of the modern historian; but only when the books of his successors prove to have held their own as well as his have done, will it be time definitely to rank them above him as historians in the broadest sense of the term.

John Lothrop Motley (1814-77) succeeded Prescott, not only as the next of the great historians born in Massachusetts, but also as the historian of an episode in that reign of Philip II on which Prescott was labouring at the close of his life.

**Motley's
early life.**

Motley had many social and educational advantages—not the least among them being the opportunity to study at Göttingen, where he formed a close friendship with Bismarck. For some years after his return to America

he accomplished nothing remarkable, failing with two novels and also as a legislator. His articles in *The North American Review* gave his friends hopes of some brilliant achievements, and such hopes might also have been cherished by all who read his sprightly letters from abroad. Years afterward, the two volumes of his *Correspondence*, filled with accounts of famous persons and events, almost rivalled his histories in interest, although not in fame.

His studies in Dutch history were begun about 1846 and were carried on under such difficulties that five years

later he went to Europe
His histories. to make a fresh start.

He studied at the Hague and other places, and finally, in 1856, issued at London the now famous volumes entitled *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*. Seventeen thousand copies were sold the first year in England alone, and Motley was welcomed to their ranks by the chief historians of the day. In 1860, the first two volumes of his *History of the United Netherlands* were published, and in 1868 the two concluding volumes.



J. L. Motley.

Meanwhile Motley had taken much to heart the perils of his country during the civil war and had done good service to the Union cause in England by explanatory letters in the *London Times*.
His later career.

He was appointed Minister to Austria, where he served several years. Somewhat later—in 1869—he was made minister to England, but the next year was recalled in a way which, to say the least, though not inexplicable, was scarcely tactful. In 1874, he published, as

a continuation of his histories, *The Life and Death of John of Barneveld*. Then his health gave way and in three years he was dead.

About the brilliancy and thoroughness of his historical writings there has never been doubt; it is equally clear that he is the most eloquent of American historians and that his eloquence is in large part due to his intense zeal for religious and civil liberty. **His art.** That he was free from partisanship cannot be successfully maintained, but it may be held that both he and the historian who chiefly influenced him, Macaulay, would have been less interesting writers if they had been more judicial-minded men. And surely one cannot find it in one's heart to wish that Motley had not exerted all the resources of his art to describe the heroism of the Dutch and of William the Silent.

Francis Parkman, the youngest of the elder group of historians, is by many persons considered the greatest.

Parkman's early years. He lived late enough to adopt the most modern methods of research and by his choice of subject made himself a link between the two schools of American historians. The defeat of the French power in North America was a theme in which patriotic interest was blended with exotic romance. Park-



Francis Parkman

man was born in Boston, graduated at Harvard, visited Europe, and then took an adventurous journey into the Western wilderness. His account of his experiences was

published in 1847 under the title of *The Oregon Trail*, and it retains its interest to a remarkable extent as a picture of the West at the time that region was about to pass under the control of civilized man.

His health never recovered from the exposure to which he was subjected, and, like Prescott, he nearly lost the use of his sight. Often he could not read or write more than five minutes at a time; but with the aid of others he went through large masses of copied documents and of books, and he travelled far to search libraries and also to view the scenes of the events he wished to describe.

His great series was begun in 1861 with the publication of two volumes entitled *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*; in 1892, the year before his death, he issued *A Half Century of Conflict*. The story of the French settlement and forced abandonment of Canada was not told in sequence, for *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* was really a kind of epilogue and the concluding volumes, *Montcalm and Wolfe*, appeared in 1884. Detailed criticism of the eleven volumes is unnecessary here, but the general finish of Parkman's style, his varied powers of description, characterisation and narration, the painstaking accuracy of his scholarship, and the romantic interest of his themes, cannot be too strongly insisted upon. If he suffers at all in comparison with Motley, the fact is due to the greater interest the world has taken and will probably continue to take in Motley's themes; if he suffers in comparison with Prescott, it is because of his too lavish use of details and the sameness of his accounts of Indian tortures and forest fighting. But it is better to enjoy our great historians than to compare them, and he is hard to please who is not fascinated by Parkman's descriptions

of Indians and trappers and heroic missionaries and gallant soldiers. We march with him through trackless forests and float with him down unknown streams, almost forgetting that he is not a romancer but a serious historian. As a matter of fact, he would not have succeeded as a romancer, as his single experiment in fiction, *Vassall Morton*, abundantly proves.

With the historians we may conveniently class the learned George Ticknor (1791-1871), author of the most

**Ticknor's
life.**

elaborate of all histories of Spanish literature and the first

great American scholar of the modern type. Ticknor was born in Boston, graduated at Dartmouth, and was admitted to the bar. He felt called to be a scholar, however, and saw clearly that to realise his ambition he must secure better training than America then afforded. He determined to



Geo. Ticknor

study at Göttingen, but had great difficulty in securing in Boston the books he needed in order to acquire even a slight acquaintance with German. He sailed in 1815, and returned four years later to fill the chair of modern languages at Harvard. Here he laboured for sixteen years, causing something of a revolution in methods of study and giving a great impetus to American scholarship. After 1835 his life was passed in study and writing, in travel, and in philanthropical work, such as his labours in connection with the founding of the Boston Public Library.

Ticknor was scarcely a brilliant man, but he was an

extremely serviceable one. His *History of Spanish Literature* appeared in 1849 and at once took its place as one

of the most erudite performances to be credited to any American. It has held its place

remarkably well, although it has needed to be corrected and supplemented, and has rarely been considered very illuminating or interesting. In 1864, Ticknor published a memoir of his friend Prescott, but the general reader who wishes to see the great scholar at his best will turn from his formal works to his informal correspondence, which is to be found in the two delightful volumes of his *Life, Letters, and Journals* (1876). Ticknor at one time or another met an astonishingly large number of interesting persons, beginning with Jefferson and Lord Byron; hence the memorials of his long life are both instructive and entertaining, and, to the reader of scholarly aspirations, not a little inspiring.

The career of the versatile George William Curtis (1824-92) forms a link between the men of letters we

have been discussing and the orators and publicists with a brief discussion of whom this chapter will conclude. He was born in

Providence, removed when a youth to New York, studied at Brook Farm and Concord, thus imbibing inspiration from Transcendentalism, and finally completed his education by spending three or four years in Europe and the Orient. In 1851, he published *Nile Notes of a Howadji*, and he followed it up with other light books of travel now forgotten mainly because they were too highly coloured and effusive. He also satirised the social pretensions of New York in his *Potiphar Papers*, attempted sentimental fiction, as we have seen, in *Prue and I*, and published one serious novel, *Trumps*, which was a plain failure.

Meanwhile he had discovered his true fields of activity. He became editor of *Putnam's Magazine*, one of the first of the important modern monthlies, and he gave encouragement to the better writers who were seeking to banish sentimentalism and provinciality from our literature. He also took up the antislavery cause and supported it in polished public lectures and in addresses before academic audiences. Finally, in 1853, he began his long career as a light suggestive essayist in the "Editor's Easy Chair" of *Harper's Monthly*. After the civil war he continued and, indeed, increased his usefulness as a public-spirited citizen by addresses and various labours in behalf of civil service reform.

His main public services.



George M. Curtis

For the eight years before his death he was one of the chief exemplars of independence in politics, thus paralleling in some ways the later career of Lowell. The strictly literary value of his work is probably not so high as it appeared to be a few years ago; but it seems likely that for years to come his best political addresses will furnish encouragement to reformers and idealists, and that readers will continue to enjoy the best of his refined and often charming essays.

Americans have been long and justly proud of their political speakers and writers and have collected their writings in numerous volumes that have been of untold service to students of history, to lawyers, especially at the beginning of their

Orators and publicists.

careers, and to patriotic citizens. Very few, however, of the speeches, pamphlets, and treatises that make up these volumes have possessed enough permanent charm and power to gain a place in American literature, in the narrower and more æsthetic sense of that term. In other words, the elaborate orations of Edward Everett, the once magnetic speeches of Henry Clay, the rigorously logical utterances of John C. Calhoun, furnish pleasure to but few modern readers. This has been the fate of most spoken and written discourse on political subjects since the world began, for each generation has its own politics to consider, and speeches, as a rule, seem cold and lifeless when the circumstances that occasioned them are forgotten and when the voice and action of the speaker that gave them life are matters of tradition only. The names of Prentiss, Hayne, Yancey, Rufus Choate, Wendell Phillips, Garrison, Greeley, Benton, Legaré, Stephens, Sumner, and many others are important to the student of politics and would deserve consideration in any account of the intellectual achievements of America; but the student of literature finds only two distinctively public men of this remarkably interesting political epoch to whose writings a fairly high literary quality attaches. It is almost needless to say that these are Daniel Webster (1782-1852) and Abraham Lincoln (1809-65).

To tell the story of Webster's life would be almost equivalent to abridging a long period of American history.

New Hampshire can claim the credit of being his birthplace; Massachusetts made him her representative in both houses of Congress, thus furnishing the stage for his genius; the entire Republic derived benefit from his labours as a patriot and statesman, and delight from his triumphs as a lawyer and orator. In

**Webster's
career.**

1818, his argument before the Supreme Court at Washington in the famous Dartmouth College Case placed him at the head of American advocates and expounders of the Constitution. From 1820 to 1830, he added to his fame by commemorative orations such as that delivered on the deaths of Jefferson and John Adams. In the last-named year he delivered the greatest of his forensic speeches in his celebrated "Reply to Hayne." He won this famous senatorial contest not so much by the solidity of his arguments as by the prophetic fervour of his deep, broad patriotism, and he became the hope of the upholders of the Union and the idol of thousands of his fellow Whigs. Twenty years later, by his "Seventh of March Speech," he



Daniel Webster

showed that he could not keep pace with the radical abolitionists, and his popularity declined, particularly in New England. Yet his career, although marred by personal weaknesses, had been consistent and worthy of the homage it had received, nor has the lapse of years appreciably diminished, even if it has not enhanced, his fame.

We are strictly concerned, however, only with his place in American literature. This, according to many readers

His place in literature.

and critics, is very high, some persons not hesitating to rank him with Demosthenes and Cicero and Burke. Others, waiving the question how far the respective powers of eloquence of

past orators may be profitably compared, urge that in the history of culture Webster's writings can never rank with those of Cicero, that they are inferior in philosophic grasp to those of Burke, that they must yield in literary importance, especially in point of style, to those of the great French Bishop, Bossuet. The matter cannot be settled and need not be pursued; but the reader who is interested in it may profitably ask himself whether Webster's works are actually read as frequently and extensively as those of indisputably great men of letters are wont to be. For our present purposes it is better to emphasise the patriotic fire, the dignity, the power of such orations as that on the laying of the corner-stone of the Bunker Hill monument and of such senatorial speeches as the "Reply to Hayne." The speeches in prosecution of the murderers of Captain White and in defence of the Kennistons are models of clear exposition and reveal Webster's ability to stir the emotions of the average man. At least a fair proportion of his writings may be regarded as having already become classic for his countrymen, and his entire works will continue to possess interest and importance to the student. So much can scarcely be said of many men of letters, and Webster has in addition his wide-spread fame as an orator and a statesman.

Lincoln's fame as a man and a statesman is even more than Webster's a cherished possession of his countrymen and of the world at large, and he stands little
Lincoln. in need of the praise that belongs to the successful writer. His two inaugurals and his Gettysburg Address are, however, couched in such flawlessly simple prose and deal with memorable subjects with such intellectual and emotional power that they have secured him a place in American literature to which assuredly he did not

aspire. Nor were these utterances dependent for their value mainly upon the occasions that called them forth.



Lincoln.

They represented, on the contrary, what a man great in character and in mental endowments could achieve through his devotion to truth and goodness, his knowledge of the people and their ways, his absorption of the culture afforded by a few great books like the Bible and the works of Shakespeare. The merits of style and substance thus acquired are to be seen, not merely in the three classic pieces just mentioned, but also in Lin-

coln's letters, in his debates with Douglas, and, conspicuously, in the clear and brave address delivered at the Cooper Union, New York city, in 1860.

It should be remembered furthermore that the humane and wholesome qualities

**A typical
American
writer.** that make
Lincoln's writ-
ings and fame

so precious an inheritance of the American people are, on the whole, the qualities that characterise the books and writers that are most typical of America and most popular with

Americans. Franklin and Cooper and Longfellow and Whittier are products of American democracy and repre-



LINCOLN'S HOME IN SPRINGFIELD,
ILLINOIS.

sent it in their respective ways much as Lincoln does in his. Emerson in his essays on conduct, and Lowell in his odes and his *Biglow Papers*, Bryant in his moralising, and Irving in his sentiment, draw much of the force of their appeal from their sympathy with the masses of their countrymen. An exceptionally endowed genius like Poe, who derives his strength from the atmosphere of romance rather than from the soil of his native land, only proves more clearly, because he is such an exception, the close connection between American democracy and American literature which the writings of Lincoln and Franklin and the other authors just named abundantly illustrate.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR CHAPTER X

A. For General and Special Works and Anthologies, see the Bibliography at the end of Chapter I.

B. Helps for Further Study.—For specimens of early American humour, see the actor-editor W. E. Burton's *Cyclopædia of Wit and Humour* (2 vols., 1858). Haweis's *American Humorists* (1882) discusses those humorists whose fame crossed the Atlantic. For a discussion much fuller than that given in this chapter, see Trent's "A Retrospect of American Humour" in *The Century* for November, 1901. Charles Farrar Browne's *Complete Works*, with a memoir by Melville D. Landon, better known as the humorist "Eli Perkins," appeared in 1875. For the historians, see J. F. Jameson, *The History of Historical Writing in America* (1891). For Sparks, see his *Life and Writings*, edited by H. B. Adams (2 vols., 1893). The best edition of Prescott is that by John Foster Kirk (16 vols., 1870-74). See also the biography by Ticknor (1864), and that by Rollo Ogden (*American Men of Letters*, 1904). Motley's histories may be had in a uniform edition of nine volumes. See his *Letters*, edited by G. W. Curtis (2 vols., 1889), and the *Memoir* by O. W. Holmes (1879). There are several uniform editions

of Parkman's histories. See the biography by C. H. Farnham (1900) and that by H. D. Sedgwick (*American Men of Letters*, 1904). For Ticknor, see his *Life, Letters, etc.* (2 vols., 1876). Many of Grant White's later books are still in print, as well as his two editions of Shakespeare. Whipple's works may be had in a uniform edition (9 vols.). G. W. Curtis's early works were collected in five volumes in 1856. His *Orations and Addresses* were edited by C. E. Norton (3 vols., 1894). Four collections of his various essays and studies are dated 1892, 1893, 1894, 1898. See also the biography by Edward Cary (*American Men of Letters*, 1894) and *Letters to John S. Dwight* (1898). Webster's works were published in six volumes in 1851. There have been several volumes of his selected speeches, e. g., those edited by Whipple (1879) and by A. J. George (1893). A collection of his letters appeared in 1902, and a new edition of his works in 1903-1904. See the biographies by George Ticknor Curtis (2 vols., 1870), by H. C. Lodge (*American Statesmen*, 1883), and by J. B. McMaster (1902). Lincoln's complete works were edited by Nicolay and Hay (2 vols., 1894), the authors of the most elaborate life of the great President (10 vols., 1890). For the lives and works of other statesmen, see Channing and Hart's *Guide to American History*.

CHAPTER XI

LATTER-DAY WRITERS (1866-1904)

It is obviously a very difficult, if not an impossible, task to view in the proper perspective the history or the literature of the period in which we live. Some knowledge of the outlines of both is, however, necessary, and this may be obtained in a fairly satisfactory manner, provided we do not demand a thoroughly critical treatment of matters about which there can be as yet no settled judgments, or even well-defined opinions. To attempt, for example, to say whether our living minor poets will appear any more important in 1950 than the minor poets of half a century ago appear to-day would be rather rash; it is not in the least rash to say that the average minor poet of the present time shows a far greater knowledge of the technical resources of his art than his predecessor of 1850 displayed. In like manner, it is plain that latter-day writers of fiction, whether they be realists or romancers, produce more artistic work on the whole than their fore-runners did, that the short-story has become a better defined and a more widely practised form of art, that historians and scholars and critics have grown to be more exact in their methods, that the number of competent writers and commendable books on any given subject has increased in an almost startling fashion.

This is but another way of saying that we are living in

an age of literary self-consciousness, and that the desire for personal distinction and the spread of education, which have so greatly affected American social and business life, have also had a strong influence upon the evolution of American literature. It would have been strange indeed if that literature had not borne in many ways the impress of the great age of industrial and territorial expansion that followed the civil war. The new South and the new West demanded and found literary expression for their thoughts and feelings. Our great war and our completion of a hundred years of national life made us take more interest both in our past and in our present condition; hence there was a renaissance of historical and biographical studies and a wide-spread production of tales and novels descriptive of life in the various States.

It has been an age of mechanical improvements and of growing wealth; in consequence, newspapers, magazines, and books have been produced in large quantities and at very low prices and have found an astonishingly large number of purchasers in all classes of society. Cheap but often very good newspapers and magazines flourish beside more expensive ones, ephemeral novels stand on the shop shelves side by side with reprints of classical works and with learned treatises, publishers vie with one another in securing the work of every available author; yet there seems to be a market for it all. New York has become the literary as well as the commercial centre of the country; but the republic is so large that other great cities publish quantities of books and literary groups of merit are found throughout the country from Maine to California.

Whether these changes have exerted in the main a benef-

icent influence upon literature is another matter. More men and women may write better; more adequately good books may be published to-day than was the case fifty years ago; but the age may leave less for posterity to admire than our more primitive grandfathers bequeathed. The homogeneous New England of the Transcendentalists may have produced more great writers and books than the whole heterogeneous country in its age of expansion may transmit to posterity. Truly great literature may be an aristocratic rather than a democratic product. We will hope not, and shall do well to indulge in little or no theorizing on the subject. On the contrary, let us be grateful for the literary advantages we enjoy in reading the good books of our contemporaries, and let us remember that both in England and on the Continent conditions very similar to ours prevail in the world of letters. The disparity so long evident between the literary production of Great Britain and that of America has almost ceased to exist, so far as the work of the immediate present is concerned. The mere fact that a book was written in England no longer gains it readers in America; indeed, the American public prefers the works of native authors. If the epoch in which we live has done nothing more than to make the literary independence of America an accomplished fact, it will be memorable in the history of American literature.

The writers and books of the modern epoch being so varied and numerous, a preliminary glance over the field to be covered ought to prove serviceable. We perceive at once that many of the most important books of the thirty years following the close of the civil war were written by authors who had

**A glance
over the
field.**

previously become famous and whom we have treated in former chapters. Thus, for example, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Lowell, Whitman, Taylor, Mrs. Stowe, and many others continued writing—some of them into the last decade of the nineteenth century. During and shortly before the war a few writers who have since gained wide reputations made their modest beginnings. Among these were Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Edmund Clarence Stedman, John Townsend Trowbridge, William Dean Howells, Louisa M. Alcott, Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton, the versatile Charles Godfrey Leland, and Prof. Charles Eliot Norton. By 1870, the lover of nature and books, John Burroughs, the historians Henry C. Lea and John Fiske, the poets Emma Lazarus, Sidney Lanier, and Edward Rowland Sill, and the multifariously successful author of "The Man Without a Country," the Rev. Edward Everett Hale, together with the humorist-novelists Samuel L. Clemens, Bret Harte, and Frank R. Stockton had won the attention of readers or had tried to win it.

Between 1870 and 1880, the names of Helen Hunt Jackson

New writers of the seventies. ("H. H."), Celia Thaxter, John Hay, "Joaquin"

Miller, and Richard Watson Gilder were added to the roll of American poets; Edward

Eggleston, destined to end as a learned historian of colonial life, commenced his career with his popular story of



Rev. E. E. Hale

Indiana, *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*; Henry Adams and Moses Coit Tyler entered upon their work as investigators of the history of American politics and literature respectively; Horace Howard Furness began his truly monumental New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare; Charles Dudley Warner won many friends by his kindly humour; and the ever-swelling ranks of the writers of fiction were enlarged by the advents of the public favourites Edward Payson Roe and General Lew Wallace, of the subtle Henry James, Jr., of Miss Constance Fenimore Woolson, Miss Sarah Orne Jewett, and Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett, as well as of George W. Cable and Robert Grant, to name no others.

Between 1880 and 1890, the number of new names of more or less importance becomes really formidable, and one would feel sorry for the future historian of our literature, but for the fact that time is sure to do a great deal of winnowing for him.

**New writers
of the
eighties.**

A few of these names will suffice to show the productivity of the decade. James Schouler and John Bach McMaster wrote the first volumes of their elaborate histories of the United States under the Constitution, and Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge also published historical works; Thomas R. Lounsbury, Willam C. Brownell, and Brander Matthews began their work as critics; Hamilton W. Mabie and Henry Van Dyke also laid the basis of their popularity in critical writings; George Edward Woodberry joined them and soon attached himself as well to the new poets represented by Henry C. Bunner, James Whitcomb Riley, and Miss Edith Thomas; Phillips Brooks reached through his printed sermons many who could not listen to his eloquence; finally Joel Chandler Harris and Richard Malcolm Johnston depicted

life in Georgia, Thomas Nelson Page described Old Virginia, Miss Mary N. Murfree drew attention to the picturesque mountaineers of Tennessee, Miss Mary E. Wilkins (later Mrs. Freeman) painted prim New England scenes and characters, and Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell and Francis Marion Crawford began to give proofs of their versatile powers.

Since 1890, nearly all the representatives of the ante-bellum period and some whose fame was entirely made

after 1865 have passed away; but while their places have not been exactly filled, so large

a number of new aspirants has come forward that the literary ranks present the appearance of an army rather than that of a select troop. It would be idle to try to exhaust the new names, but those of the poets Eugene Field, Richard Hovey, Edwin Markham, Lloyd Mifflin, Madison Cawein, and William Vaughn Moody; of the historians James Ford Rhodes and Captain Alfred T. Mahan; of the critics Professors Henry A. Beers, Barrett Wendell, and George Santayana; and of the novelists Henry B. Fuller, Hamlin Garland, James Lane Allen, Mrs. Ruth McEnnery Stuart, Miss Elliott, Miss Glasgow, Mrs. Wiggin, Harold Frederic, Richard Harding Davis, Stephen Crane, Paul Leicester Ford, Owen Wister, and Winston Churchill will suffice to show that the energy with which the American people have sent their soldiers and traders throughout the world finds a counterpart in the active endeavours of their authors to cover the entire field of literature.

Whatever may be the precise ranking the future will give to our latter-day poets, there seems to be little reason

to think that any one or any group of them will occupy so clearly defined a position of eminence as is awarded Bryant, the chief New England

Very recent writers.

The poets.

poets, and Poe. The general poetic art of the period shows, however, as we have seen, a very considerable advance on that of the preceding generation, thanks partly to the example set by such poets as Longfellow, Lowell, and above all, Poe, partly to an augmented sense of the value of poetic form manifested throughout the world. The day of large subjects of universal interest treated with free creative power seems, on the other hand, to have passed for the time being, and in consequence of this fact as well as of the spread of fiction and the increased interest in science, modern poetry tends more and more to appeal to a limited class of readers. These love it with all the more intensity because it is comparatively neglected by the masses, and hence the minor poet of to-day is not only likely to worship and exhibit his art far more than was the case with his brother of a generation ago, but he is probably surer of gaining a compact and appreciative audience. Thus it has come to pass that the last quarter of a century has seen both in England and in America a larger number of competent craftsmen polishing surprisingly good verses than could have been found before in any epoch.

The number of poets living in 1904 whose careers began before the civil war is larger than one would at first suppose.

Edmund pose. The oldest of those whose names are
Clarence widely known is John Townsend Trowbridge
Stedman. (born in 1827), who has just published his interesting reminiscences. Mr. Trowbridge, however, is chiefly known through his stories for young people, and must yield precedence to the poet-critic, Edmund Clarence Stedman, and to that accomplished poet and writer of fiction, Thomas Bailey Aldrich. Mr. Stedman was born in Hartford, Connecticut, in October, 1833. He began work

as a youthful newspaper editor, made his home in New York city in 1855, contributing to the *Tribune* and the *World*, was war correspondent for the latter journal, then engaged in financiering and became a member of the New York Stock Exchange, where he held a seat from 1869 to 1900. Thus it will be seen that, like Samuel Rogers, he was a "banker-poet"; but it is plain that in his activities he is truly American and has few British analogues. He has found time, not merely to write many poems ranging from the charm and grace of "The Diamond Wedding" and "Pan in Wall Street," to the power and true feeling of the tribute to Hawthorne, but also to compose volumes of criticism that have been both helpful and popular—*Victorian Poets*, *Poets of America*, etc.—and to edit anthologies of modern British and American poetry that have illustrated both the good quality of current verse and their editor's unrivalled knowledge and appreciation of the work of his contemporaries and juniors. Mr. Stedman is thus in a very true sense the poet's poet.



Edmund C. Stedman

The career of Mr. Aldrich has been more distinctively creative. He was born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in November, 1836, became a member of the Thomas Bailey Aldrich. Taylor-Stoddard coterie in New York, and wrote for magazines and newspapers. He gained popularity in 1855 by his "Ballad of Babie Bell," published several volumes of verse, and then removed to

Boston, where from the close of the civil war he did literary editing. His chief charge was *The Atlantic Monthly*, which he conducted from 1881 to 1890. He had meanwhile published his amusing and popular *Story of a Bad Boy* (1870) as well as *Marjorie Daw and Other People* and additional prose works. He had attempted the poetic drama, and had collected his verses in numerous volumes, which he later revised and rearranged with great care



J. B. Almon

(1895). In recent years, while far from prolific, he has not been altogether silent. He is too close to us to be judged save in the most tentative way; but we hazard little in saying that his carefully wrought verse will probably outlast his agreeable prose. As a poet he yields to no American, at least, as a delicately minute artist. It has not been his fortune to produce such unique and definite impressions and influ-

ences as Poe was enabled to do, but he has almost literally carved and polished small, flawless works of art that seem destined to be cherished as long as American poetry survives. He is above all successful in his quatrains—packing his four lines with meaning and burnishing them until they seem like perfect gems either of intense radiance or of deep glow. He has taken to heart the truth of his own lines:

Great thoughts in crude, unshapely verse set forth
Lose half their preciousness, and ever must.
Unless the diamond with its own rich dust
Be cut and polished, it seems little worth.

With Mr. Aldrich and Mr. Stedman may be conveniently grouped a few other poets of well but not so long established reputations. John Hay (born in Indiana in 1838)—latterly the distinguished Secretary of State—published his *Pike County Ballads* in 1871, and surely few writers have come closer to the popular heart than he did with “Jim Bludso” and “Little Breeches.” Cincin-

Other
established
poets.

natus Hiner Miller (born in Indiana in 1841), better known as “Joaquin” Miller, turned his early experiences in Central America and on the Pacific Coast to account in volumes of poetry that at first attracted British rather than American readers, and are certainly, with all their faults of style, memorable as early attempts to utter in verse the large and vigorous



Joaquin Miller

aspirations of the West. Richard Watson Gilder (born in New Jersey in 1844) stands in complete contrast with Miller so far as the form and substance of his thoughtful, carefully wrought verses are concerned; but in his quiet strength he is as completely an American product as any unfettered denizen of mountain or prairie. More than any other of our later poets Mr. Gilder has furthered in his writings and by his other labours, especially as editor of *The Century* magazine, the cause of political reform. He is the ideal “good citizen” and is all the better poet in consequence.

If to the names of these living poets of the North and

West we could add the name of Sidney Lanier, one of the most pathetic pages in the history of American literature would not need to be written. By his sad death, however, renown has perhaps come to him earlier than it would otherwise have done; for many readers of the past twenty years have not hesitated to declare him the greatest of our latter-day poets, if not the most significant figure in recent American literature. We are not called on here to reckon with these claims, but we are called on to honour the man. He was born in Macon, Georgia, February 3, 1842, and had just



Sidney Lanier.

graduated and begun teaching when the civil war broke out. He volunteered early, served as a blockade-runner, was imprisoned and developed pulmonary disease. After the war he was doomed to labour at ungenial employments while cherishing hopes of artistic success which his passion for music and his bent for literature warranted, but which his lack of means and his bad health discouraged. In 1867, he tried his hand at a story of army life entitled *Tiger Lilies*, but it was a failure. His health growing worse, he gave up the law practice he had had with his father and spent a winter in Texas. Then, realising how precarious was his hold on life and boldly resolving to test his powers and give the world the best that was in him, he settled in Baltimore in 1873 as first flute in the Peabody Orchestra.

Years of most heroic labour followed. The fine reflective lyric "Corn," published in 1875, won him friends,

chief among whom was Bayard Taylor. The next year he wrote a "Cantata" for the Centennial Exposition, and

a year later a volume of his poems was issued.

His struggles. Meanwhile, he was making extensive studies in English literature, especially in the earlier periods, and was considering the relations of poetry and music. This justified his appointment, in February, 1879, as Lecturer on English literature in the newly established Johns Hopkins University. It also justifies his admirers in asserting that Lanier's mind was peculiarly sensitive to the intellectual and artistic tendencies of his time, and that, if he had lived, he would have received the honours due to pioneers in new movements. But, although his lectureship brought permanent fruit in his suggestive *Science of English Verse* and in his less valuable but still significant volume *The English Novel*, the labours it involved did much to exhaust his slight stock of strength. Brave to the last, he planned and issued some books for boys and composed highly wrought lyrical and descriptive poems; but in 1881 he was forced to seek the mountain health resorts of North Carolina. All was in vain, and on September 7 he died as nobly as he had lived.

A memoir with a more complete edition of his poems was soon issued, and from time to time other volumes

containing letters, essays, and lectures have
His growing fame. been added, so that the mass of his works is

now fairly large. The number of his eulogistic critics and devoted readers has steadily increased both in America and in England until the permanence of his poetic fame seems assured. Whether or not his genius was not too exclusively musical, whether the sense of mastery ever replaced completely that of effort in his verse, these and other questions will doubtless be asked

for some time to come, and no one can be sure what the final answers will be. But the most exigent criticism can scarcely demand that "Corn," "My Springs," "The Marshes of Glynn," and several other poems should cease to be reckoned among the treasures of American poetry; and surely the memory of such a life as Lanier's can never be less than precious to his countrymen. He was not merely a true scholar and poet; he was a brave man who obeyed his own injunction:

"Of fret, of dark, of thorn, of chill,
Complain not thou, O heart; for these
Bank in the current of the will
To uses, arts, and charities."

Lanier is but one of many finely gifted poets who did not live long enough to sing their full souls out, or else

Other poets were temperamentally prevented from so
no longer doing and died without the world's plaudits.
living.

Among these may be mentioned Edward Rowland Sill (1841-87), a native of Connecticut, who taught literature in California and elsewhere. His quiet poetry attracted little notice during his life, but it has steadily won its way with thoughtful readers, who have also welcomed a volume of his prose. In this group belong that true disciple of Horace and lover of children, Eugene Field (1850-95), who was much more than a humorous Chicago journalist, and Henry Cuyler Bunner (1855-96), better known during his short life as editor of *Puck* and as a writer of fiction than as a delicate lyric poet. A more aspiring poet than these was Richard Hovey (1864-1900), whose poetic dramas based upon the Arthurian legend, to say nothing of his songs and more elaborate lyrics, seemed to many to give promise of a

distinguished career. But perhaps the most remarkable members of this group are four women. Emma Lazarus (1849-87) of New York, a Jewess of Portuguese extraction, who wrote with power upon themes connected with her race and deserves remembrance as a poetic dramatist and translator; Celia Thaxter (1836-94), poet of the rugged New England coast; Emily Dickinson (1830-66), a woman of genius, who lived in seclusion at Amherst, Massachusetts, her formless but deeply thoughtful poetry appearing only after her death; and finally, Helen Hunt Jackson (1831-85), whose work in verse and prose deserves more consideration than can be given it here.

Mrs. Jackson was Miss Helen Maria Fiske, who, like Miss Dickinson, was born at Amherst, but whose life was far from being that of a recluse. She married "H. H." early Captain Hunt, then twelve years after his death took as her second husband a resident of Colorado. Her *Verses* appeared during her widowhood; a second volume of poetry was issued shortly after her marriage to Mr. Jackson; her later literary work was mainly in the form of fiction. Her interest in the Mission Indians of California led to a book of protest against the Government's treatment of its wards and also to the popular novel *Ramona*, a work noble in conception though scarcely in execution. In the general range and quality of her poetry, "H. H.," as she signed herself, takes a very high, if not the highest rank among the American women who have written verse in



Helen Jackson

a period distinguished for the number of talented women it has given to the service of literature. "A Last Prayer," and "Habeas Corpus," her last poem, would deserve inclusion in a most rigorously compiled anthology of meditative verse.

Criticism of such contemporaries as Professor Woodberry, Mr. Edwin Markham, Mr. Mifflin, Mr. Moody, Mr.

C. L. Moore, Mr. Cawein and others is not so
Younger important as a cordial recognition of the ser-
living poets. vice they render the cause of pure literature

by their devotion to the art they have felt called to pursue. Such devotion, praiseworthy in any age, is particularly worthy of honour and emulation in a period when the rewards of popularity and pecuniary gains go in increasing measure to the purveyors of what is most aptly denominated light literature. It is proper enough that poetry should be its own reward, it is right and natural enough that it should no longer hold its prestige over prose, since it has ceased to deal with life in a large, universal way. But these facts do not excuse the utter indifference of thousands to an art that has never before been more gracefully or more reverently practised, nor should they lessen our gratitude to the artists who pursue their ideals, although deprived in a considerable measure of that public sympathy which was as the breath of life to the master singers of the past. It is not to be believed that sympathy with our poets will ever become extinct among us; but it is well to remind ourselves that permanent excellence is not to be expected of any art the existence of which is merely tolerated by the general public.

It is a commonplace of criticism that whatever popularity has been lost by poetry has been gained—and in over-measure—by fiction. It is equally obvious that dur-

ing the sixties, seventies, and eighties more or less minute studies of life in various centres constituted the main

Fiction. work of American novelists—in other words,

that realistic local fiction was popular—but that in the nineties there was a reaction in favour of romance, especially of the historical variety, colonial and Revolutionary themes being preferred. It is furthermore plain that toward the end of the modern period every section of the country had produced competent novelists, that American fiction was more in demand than that produced abroad, that large sales of favourite books became so familiar as to excite no surprise, and that fears began to be entertained lest the quantities of novels put forth with sensational advertising by competing publishers should almost swamp good books of every kind. We may refrain from speculating on what the future of the novel will be when youths fresh from college dash off volumes which publishers accept and grey-headed men and women actually read, just as we may refrain from criticism or even mention of half a hundred novelists of at least fair ability. The future will take care of itself, and the uncriticised novelists will get themselves read. It is well, however, to remark that, while the art of fiction has shown great improvement, particularly in the department of the short story, it is not in the least likely that the rank and file of our successful novelists are any more destined to achieve lasting fame than their predecessors of sixty years ago.

If we ask ourselves what American writers of fiction during the modern period have rivalled
' Mark Twain.' Cooper and Poe in appealing to foreign as well as to native readers, we shall probably name first the great humorist who is fortunately still liv-

ing, and the story-teller of early California who has only recently died. Samuel Langhorne Clemens was born in Missouri in 1835, became early a printer and a pilot on the Mississippi, tried mining and editing in Nevada and later in California, delivered humorous lectures in the West, and in 1867 laid the foundations of his fame by his inimitable *Jumping Frog*. Two years later his amusing account of a tour of Europe and the East—*The Innocents Abroad*—



Mark Twain

placed him at the head of all American humorists, but this book and one or two others probably did his reputation harm in so far as they tended to obscure perception of the fact that with the publication of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in 1876, "Mark Twain" ceased to be primarily a humorist and became one of the greatest living writers of the fiction of blended humour, adventure, and realistic description of characters and places. The more serious and gentle side of his nature was shown in the romance of Edward VI's time entitled *The Prince and the Pauper*, published in 1882, and two years later he reached the zenith of his career in the admirable story of life in the Mississippi Valley entitled *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, a sequel to *Tom Sawyer*.

Then unfortunately he became partner in a publishing house that failed and involved him in heavy debts. Like Walter Scott before him, he went bravely to work to discharge these obligations and by dint of lecturing through-

out the world and writing numerous books he was at last able to pay every dollar. That some of the work of this period is scarcely worthy of his talents **His later career.** is a fact of small consequence in view of the cheerful heroism with which he faced disaster. During the past few years he has bravely faced much public disapprobation in order to express his own disapproval of the foreign policy of the country he loves as dearly and has honoured as signally as any of his contemporaries. It is to the credit of the American people that nothing he has lately written, whether censorious or laboriously humorous, has diminished the affection and respect in which they hold him and his work. So thoroughly American a career and two such masterpieces as *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* seem to assure "Mark Twain," if not Mr. Clemens, an abiding reputation not surpassed by that of any of his fellow writers of the modern period.

The early career of Francis Bret Harte (1839-1902) was not unlike that of Mr. Clemens. He was born in Albany, New York, went to California when **Bret Harte.** he was fifteen, taught school, engaged in mining, became a printer and a writer for newspapers.¹ Then

¹ It has been observed—notably by Professor Beers—that in the main the authors who succeeded the New England school in popularity and influence were self-educated men. Of late the academic type of author has been apparently gaining the upper hand. Culture works for homogeneity; hence the spread of literature produced by academically trained writers may counteract some of the bad effects produced upon author and book by the heterogeneous character of our national life—effects seen in the crudeness and flaccid commonplaceness of many popular productions, whether we consider their form or their substance of thought and sentiment. On the other hand, a more classic type of literature may be, perhaps, obtained only at the loss of raciness and originality not well to be spared.

he held offices, in particular that of secretary to the United States branch mint from 1864 to 1870. During this period he wrote some of his most humorous verses, such as "The Society Upon the Stanislaus," and also began to edit *The Overland Monthly* (1868). In the second number of this he inserted "The Luck of Roaring Camp" and in the third what is perhaps his most famous story, "The Outcasts of Poker Flat." These and such tales as



Bret Harte

"Tennessee's Partner" speedily established his reputation. In 1870, his famous poem "Plain Language from Truthful Jeems," better known as "The Heathen Chinee," marked the culmination of his career as a humorous poet. Then, after a year's work as a professor of literature, he went to New York and supported himself by lecturing and writing for magazines. After this he spent several years abroad in consular duties, and finally made his home in London—his writings losing power, according to some critics, because of his long severance from the land and people he best understood. Whether this be true or not, there can be no doubt that he was regarded in Europe as one of the most able and distinctively national of American writers, and that many readers continued to enjoy the numerous products of his prolific imagination. His short tales were generally better received than his long novel *Gabriel Conroy*, and it was felt that his heroes and heroines were more interesting when mingling with the miners and gamblers of California than when associating

with more outwardly respectable people in American and English fashionable circles of society. To name here even one out of every five of his volumes would be tedious; but it may be said with confidence that few people have ever found tedious a tale of Bret Harte's in which Jack Hamlin and Colonel Starbottle make their appearance.

Without doubt the most widely discussed of recent American novelists and the one who has probably taken

his art most seriously
William Dean is William Dean
Howells.

Howells, the most representative of our men of letters since Lowell. He was born in Ohio in 1837, learned to set type on his father's newspaper, and was an editor by the time he was twenty-one. In 1860, he published with John James Piatt, a genuine poet of the Middle West who is still living, a volume entitled *Poems of*



W. D. Howells.

Two Friends. He has since published verses, but has not specially cultivated this phase of his talents. From 1861 to 1865 he was consul at Venice and shortly after he caught the ear of the public by his excellent descriptive books, *Venetian Life* and *Italian Journeys*. Then he turned to his real life work—the writing of fiction of a minutely realistic type. He described every-day life with the faithfulness of the great French and Russian realists, in a style of much grace, flexibility, and precision. *Their Wedding Journey* appeared in 1871, the year in which he began a decade's connection with *The Atlantic Monthly* as its editor.

Then, with a reputation based on a goodly number of novels, among them *The Lady of the Aroostook*, Mr. Howells removed to New York, where for a while

His career in New York. he edited a department in *Harper's Magazine*.

This gave him occasion to cultivate the art of criticism which he has since used with much effect both to expound his own theories of fiction and to express his cordial good will to younger writers. Meanwhile he had written little comedies, and novels which to many readers seem the high-water marks of his career—notably *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885), a strikingly faithful study of the evolution of a self-made man, and *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1889), probably the most successful attempt to represent in fiction the complex life of the American metropolis. The fifteen years just passed have witnessed no diminution of his energy. Novels, volumes of reminiscences, critical essays, have followed one another in rapid succession to the pleasure and profit of the admirers who have remained constant to him in spite of the reaction toward romance and less carefully studied realism. Even those writers who do not adhere to his canons of art and criticism nevertheless owe him much for lessons of technic that have rendered their work more acceptable to a better trained reading public. That he has published in the course of his life a number of volumes that will scarcely outlive him, Mr. Howells would be the first to admit; that his best books give a picture of life in our modern period more faithful than can be found anywhere else, he would be too modest to affirm; but at least some students of our literature can be found who are willing to affirm it for him. They will affirm further that no other recent American writer of fiction has listened so keenly and so

sympathetically to the rising murmurs of the tide of social reform.

Closely associated with Mr. Howells in the public mind is a writer whom he loves to champion in spite of radical differences between them. This is **Henry James.**

James, son of an extremely subtle metaphysician and theologian of the same name, and brother of the distinguished psychologist, Prof. William James of Harvard. He was born in New York in 1843, was educated abroad, studied law at Harvard, and then turned to writing sketches and essays for the magazines. His career as a novelist began in 1875 and has been steadily prosecuted since. Much of his life has been passed abroad, latterly in London, of which he has become a permanent resident. Like Mr. Howells, he is an analyst of character, a critic, a careful stylist, and a disciple of the French and Russian novelists. He differs from his friend in carrying all these



H. James

qualities to extremes and in preferring international themes, or, more exactly, in giving a European—latterly an English—setting to his story, introducing American characters, and watching and interpreting the social phenomena resulting from the contact of the new civilization with the old.

If it were necessary to describe Mr. James's books by using a single word—that word would be "subtle."

His subtlety. Some persons might prefer "enigmatic" or "obscure," but although his later style has

become involved beyond all measure, although some of his books suggest the idea of one prolonged metaphor, although he has recently chosen to shadow rather than to body forth his characters and his plots, nevertheless the patient reader will find that every page gives evidence of having been composed by a thinker and observer of rare intellect and of sensitive perceptions. Whether he would not have gained, if, like Mr. Howells, he had been willing to study his countrymen in their own homes, is a question which it is idle to debate. He has chosen his line of work and by such stories as *Daisy Miller* (1878) and such novels as *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), *The Bostonians* (1886), *The Tragic Muse* (1890)—perhaps his masterpiece—*The Awkward Age* (1899) and *The Wings of the Dove* (1902) he has won an audience of intense admirers. That this audience is limited, and that its members are regarded with sympathetic solicitude by their friends, cannot be denied; but such was for a long time the position occupied by the admirers of Robert Browning. And whatever we may say of Mr. James's fiction, there should be but one opinion as to the exceptional brilliancy of his criticism, whether in volumes of essays or in such a searching monograph as his *Hawthorne in the English Men of Letters*.

To discuss, even on the inadequate scale adopted in the case of the novelists just treated, a tithe of the fairly important writers of fiction of the modern period would stretch this chapter beyond all proper bounds. The strange inventiveness and playful humour of Frank R. Stockton (1834-1902); the abundant and well-sustained narrative power of Marion Crawford (1854-); the finished pictures of creole life given by Mr. Cable (1844-); the unique negro folk-lore collected by Mr. Joel Chandler Harris (1848-) in his "Uncle

Other
novelists.

Remus" stories, and the humours of Georgia life depicted by Mr. Harris and the late Colonel Richard Malcolm Johnston (1822-98), author of the *Dukesborough Tales*; the delineations of negro character and the pictures of Virginia in Reconstruction times furnished by Mr. Thomas Nelson Page (1853-); the idealistic vein of Mr. James Lane Allen (1849-); the skilful exploitation of the mountaineers of Tennessee and Kentucky conducted by Miss Murfree (1850-) and Mr. John Fox; the faithful New England studies of Miss Jewett (1849-) and Mrs. Freeman (1862-), to name no others; the pictures of the Prairie States by Mr. Hamlin Garland (1860-);—these are topics about which one can hear and read every day, and upon which the critic of the future will be able to discourse with more impartiality than is attainable at present. To the same critic must be left the valuation of the singularly varied literary gifts of the eminent medical specialist, Dr. Weir Mitchell of Philadelphia (1829-), and of the romances of writers who are his friendly rivals although young enough in many cases to be his grandchildren—such writers as Miss Mary Johnston (1870-) and Mr. Winston Churchill (1871-). Nor can one forecast the future of fiction in general any better than one can the final reputation of this or that popular novelist. Serious treatises on the novel and the short-story and courses of fiction in colleges and universities seem on the one hand to give this form of literature a higher standing than it has ever had. On the other hand, the multiplicity of sensational successes, the almost total lack of intellectual power characteristic of many popular novels, the "machine-made" stamp that many of them bear instead of the sign-manual of the artist, make some people

fear that a flood of novels is not a truly fecundating sort of inundation.

Our glance over the field showed us that while the novelists have clearly dominated the modern period the

number of distinguished miscellaneous writers—**Criticism.**

—or solid men of letters as we may call them, if we choose to make an invidious distinction—is on the whole very creditable. American scholarship has gained in exactness, and although in both classical and English studies philology has seemed to preponderate over belles-lettres, the careers of such scholars as Prof. Francis J. Child (1825-96), Prof. Basil L. Gildersleeve (1831-) and Prof. Thomas R. Lounsbury (1838-

) show that there is no reason to fear that the humaner side of learning will be neglected to a greater extent than is normally to be expected of a practically minded people. Latter-day American criticism, although practised by many widely popular writers like Mr. Mabie, Miss Repplier, and Dr. Henry Van Dyke, can point to no commanding figure like that of Lowell, nor is it any nearer to attaining a consistent philosophy and adequate methods than British criticism seems to be. It is couched in the form of detached essays or thorough monographs rather than in that of exhaustive treatises or monumental works. But as compared with the preceding generation the modern period has made a really striking advance in criticism. The level of newspaper and magazine reviewing is higher, a large number of technical journals furnish authoritative criticism of books coming within their purview, and at least ten good critical essays or books appear to every single one that was produced fifty years ago. The critics themselves are less provincial, less dependent upon foreign opinion, endowed with better

taste, and furnished with more learning than their fore-runners. That they have been more successful in the criticism of interpretation than in that of judgment is in part due to the fact that they have had to rely for readers upon a comparatively untrained public. When that public is trained, the subtle criticism of a Henry James will be more widely read and comprehended, the merits and demerits of Mr. Howells's critical theories will be more clearly understood, and the essays and volumes of such critics as Mr. Brownell, Professor Matthews, Mr. William M. Paine, Professor Woodberry, Professor Santayana and Professor Beers will cease to be, in the main, the exclusive property of cultured coteries or of scholars and will be more influential in moulding public taste.

Turning now to examine the condition of historical studies in our period we find that much that is true of criticism is true of them. Works of notable scholarship, such as Mr. Henry C. Lea's *History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, have been produced, methods of research have become more exact, historians have shown more and more independence in choosing American themes, the materials from which a knowledge of the nation's past may be gained have been immensely increased by the publication of documentary sources of information. But although such historians as Mr. Henry Adams and Mr. James Ford Rhodes have gained many readers for their volumes dealing with special periods of American history, and although writers like Mr. James Breck Perkins continue with success the traditions of the older school founded by Irving, it can scarcely be held that latter-day historians have succeeded like Parkman in holding the balance even between history as an art and history as a science. To too many

able students of our past, original research into the materials of history has seemed the essential thing and imaginative reconstruction of that past something to be neglected, if not positively eschewed. The public, however, has not thought this and never will. Hence it came to pass that the best-known historian of the modern period was the late John Fiske (1842-1901), who, after he turned from expounding the Spencerian philosophy to writing colonial and Revolutionary history, achieved wide popularity for



JOHN FISKE.

his artistically planned and delightfully written volumes. In marked contrast with Fiske stood the learned cartographer and bibliographer Justin Winsor (1831-97), who won the plaudits of scholars by his monographs and by his great editorial labours on the important *Narrative and Critical History of America*. That the ideals of accurate scholarship held by typical modern his-

torians are worthy of the highest praise does not militate against the fact that the ideals of the historical artist are fully as noble and are absolutely essential to the existence of history as a branch of literature—that is, as a possession of the world at large and not of small groups of specialists.

There are miscellaneous writers like the late Charles Dudley Warner (1829-1900), genial humorist, essayist, writer of thoughtful fiction, and above all
Conclusion. through his gracious personality a reconciler of differences between the sections, upon whom it would

be pleasant to bestow more than a passing glance. The scholarly historian of colonial and Revolutionary literature, the late Prof. Moses Coit Tyler (1835-1900), also deserves more than a word, and it would take pages to treat adequately the services of Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1823-) in upholding high ideals of national culture and in recounting and appraising the literary triumph of New England during the great creative period of



which he is almost the last survivor. There are also forms of literature, such as biography, well represented by the late Horace E. Scudder's *James Russell Lowell* and exceptionally valuable books like General Grant's

Memoirs, that ought not to be passed over in silence. A distinct school of writers primarily interested in nature has followed in the wake of Thoreau, and a literature for and about children has been developed that makes the pioneer work of Alcott seem old-fashioned. But a chapter cannot be advantageously made to perform the services of a volume, and everything must have an end.



P. W. Higginson

Let us conclude with the thought that although American literature during its comparatively short life has produced no supreme authors like

Shakespeare and Milton, it can put forward the names of a fair number of secondary writers of authentic power and charm, can justly claim that its relative position among the literatures of the world has been advanced to an exceptional extent within the short space of two generations, and that no other modern literature has proved itself to be more adapted to the mental and æsthetic needs of an entire people.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR CHAPTER XI

A. For General and Special Works and Anthologies, see the Bibliography at the end of Chapter I.

B. Helps for Further Study.—As a matter of course valuable critical material for the study of recent American literature is not easily secured. For criticism of many authors one must rely entirely upon magazine articles to which Poole's *Index* will furnish a clue, and for biographical facts upon appendices to such books as Stedman's *American Anthology* and upon compendiums such as *Who's Who in America*. A few volumes that will be found useful may, however, be mentioned. The closing chapters of Barrett Wendell's *Literary History of America* and of George E. Woodberry's *America in Literature* are full of suggestiveness. This may also be said of the same portion of Thomas Wentworth Higginson's *Reader's History of American Literature* (1903). See also Henry C. Vedder's *American Writers of To-day* (1895) and William M. Baskervill's *Southern Writers* (1895—second series, 1903). Higginson's *Contemporaries* (1899) contains essays on Lanier and Mrs. Jackson ("H. H."). William Hayes Ward's *Memoir of Lanier* was published with the collected *Poems* of the latter (1884), and is also to be found in a later edition. A good volume of Lanier's *Select Poems* was edited in 1895 by Prof. Morgan Callaway, Jr. This contains a useful bibliography. As stated in the text, several volumes of Lanier's posthumous writings have been published in recent years. Among them may be mentioned his *Correspondence*, his lectures on Shakespeare, and the volumes entitled *Music and*

Poetry (1898) and *Retrospects and Prospects* (1899). For Bret Harte see the biography by T. W. Pemberton (1903) and H. W. Boynton's sketch in *Contemporary Men of Letters* (1903). Mrs. James T. Fields has furnished the last-named series with a small book on Charles Dudley Warner (1904) and there is an English translation of a sketch of Colonel Higginson by Mme. Blanc. For many of the writers mentioned in this chapter as well as for their forerunners consult recent volumes of reminiscences, especially those by W. D. Howells, J. T. Trowbridge and R. H. Stoddard. An article by the present writer published in the *Dial* for May 1, 1900, deals in a general way with the literary work of the period from 1880 to the close of the nineteenth century.



APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGY OF THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

1608-1903¹

1608. Captain John Smith: *A True Relation*. [Milton born.]
1620. Bradford and Winslow began to write *Mourt's Relation* (published in 1622).
1624. Captain John Smith: *The General History of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles*. [The first folio of Shakespeare appeared the year before.]
1630. Bradford probably began to write his *History of Plymouth Plantation*.
Winthrop probably began to write his *History of New England*.
1631. Captain John Smith died. Michael Wigglesworth born. [Michael Drayton died. Dryden born.]
1636. Harvard College founded.
1640. *The Bay Psalm Book*. [Corneille: *Polyeucte*.]
1644. Roger Williams: *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution*. [Milton, *Areopagitica*.]
1647. Nathaniel Ward: *The Simple Cobbler of Agawam*.
1650. Anne Bradstreet: *The Tenth Muse*, etc.
1654. Captain Edward Johnson: *The Wonder-Working Providence of Zion's Saviour in New England*.

¹ This appendix is mainly based on Prof. S. L. Whitcomb's very useful *Chronological Outlines of American Literature*. Entries for the years since 1890 have been considerably curtailed for the reason that the standing of but few recent books can be determined with even a fair approach to impartial accuracy. Some important events in the history of British and other literatures are inserted in brackets.

1661. John Eliot: New Testament translated into Algonquin (the Bible finished in 1663). [Hobbes: *Of Liberty and Necessity*.]
1662. Michael Wigglesworth: *The Day of Doom*. [Molière: *L'École des Femmes*. The Royal Society chartered.]
1663. Cotton Mather born.
1666. Alsop: *A Character of the Province of Maryland*.
1672. Anne Bradstreet died.
1673. Sewall began his Diary.
1674. Daniel Gookin: *Historical Collections*. [Milton died.]
1677. Hubbard: *Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians of New England*.
1678. The second edition of Anne Bradstreet's poems published at Boston. [Bunyan: *The Pilgrim's Progress* (part i); Dryden: *All for Love*.]
1684. Increase Mather: *An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences*.
1690. The first American newspaper, *Public Occurrences*, published at Boston.
1692. William and Mary College founded.
1693. Cotton Mather: *Wonders of the Invisible World*.
1700. Samuel Sewall: *The Selling of Joseph* (possibly the first American antislavery tract). Yale College founded. [Dryden: *Fables*. Death of Dryden.]
1702. Cotton Mather: *Magnalia*.
1703. Jonathan Edwards born.
1704. Mrs. S. K. Knight's *Journal* begun. *The Boston Newsletter* established—the first permanent newspaper in America. [Swift: *Tale of a Tub*. Galland's translation of *The Arabian Nights* begun.]
1705. Robert Beverley: *History of Virginia*. Wigglesworth died.
1706. Benjamin Franklin born. [John Evelyn died.]
1710. Cotton Mather: *Essays to do Good (Bonifacius)*. [*The Teller*, 1709. *The Spectator*, 1711.]
1720. John Woolman born.
1724. Cotton Mather: *Parentator* (a biography of Increase Mather, who died in 1723). [Kant born. Voltaire: *Henriade*.]

1727. Cadwallader Colden: *The History of the Five Indian Nations* begun.
1728. Cotton Mather died. [Gay: *The Beggar's Opera*.]
1729. Colonel Byrd writes his *History of the Dividing Line*. Sewall's *Diary* finished. [Burke born.]
1733. Franklin issues *Poor Richard's Almanac*. [Theobald's edition of Shakespeare.]
1736. Edwards: *A Faithful Narrative*, etc. Thomas Prince: *A Chronological History of New England* (vol. i).
1741. Jonathan Edwards preaches "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Franklin publishes *The General Magazine*. Tom Paine born. [Gibbon and Sainte-Pierre born. Hume: *Essays* (vol. i).]
1744. Mather Byles: *Poems*. [Pope died.]
1746. Edwards: *Treatise on the Religious Affections*. Princeton College founded.
1747. William Stith: *History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia*. [Gray: "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton." Johnson: "Plan for a Dictionary of the English Language."]
1749. Ebenezer Turell: *The Life and Character of the Reverend Benjamin Colman*. University of Pennsylvania founded. [Goethe born. Fielding: *Tom Jones*.]
1752. Philip Freneau and Timothy Dwight born. First performance in America by a professional dramatic company (in Virginia). [Chatterton and Fanny Burney born.]
1754. Jonathan Edwards: *Freedom of the Will*. Joel Barlow born. King's College (Columbia) founded. [Fielding died.]
1758. Thomas Godfrey: *The Prince of Parthia* written. Jonathan Edwards died.
1764. Thomas Hutchinson: *History of Massachusetts* (vol. i). James Otis: *Rights of the British Colonists*, etc. [Walpole: *The Castle of Otranto*. Rousseau: *Émile*.]
1765. Evans edits Godfrey's *Poems*. (Godfrey died, 1763.)
1766. Franklin: *Examination before the House of Commons*. [Goldsmith: *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Lessing: *Laocoön*.]
1767. John Dickinson: *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, etc. Evans died.

- 1771. Franklin began to write his *Autobiography*. C. B. Brown born. [Gray and Smollett died. Walter Scott born.]
- 1772. Evans's *Poems* published. John Woolman died. Wirt born. [Coleridge born.]
- 1774. Hopkinson: *A Pretty Story*. [Southey born.]
- 1775. John Trumbull: *McFingal* (canto i). [Landor and Lamb born. Burke: "Speech on Conciliation."]
- 1776. Tom Paine: *Common Sense* and *The Crisis* (No. 1). The Declaration of Independence. [Gibbon: *Decline and Fall* (vol. i). Adam Smith: *Wealth of Nations*.]
- 1779. Hopkinson: *The Battle of the Kegs*. Allston born.
- 1780. Channing born.
- 1782. Crèvecoeur: *Letters from an American Farmer*. Daniel Webster and Calhoun born. [Cowper: *Table Talk*. Rousseau: *Confessions*.]
- 1783. Washington Irving born.
- 1785. Dwight: *The Conquest of Canaan*. [Cowper: *The Task*.]
- 1786. Freneau: *Poems*. [Burns: *Poems*.]
- 1787. Barlow: *The Vision of Columbus*. Jefferson: *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Royall Tyler: *The Contrast* acted. The Constitution of the United States framed. R. H. Dana, Sr., born. [Goethe: *Iphigenie*. Schiller: *Don Carlos*.]
- 1788. *The Federalist*. [Byron born. Sainte-Pierre: *Paul et Virginie*.]
- 1789. Cooper, Hillhouse, Miss Sedgwick, Sparks, and Wilde born.
- 1790. Noah Webster: *Essays*. Mrs. Rowson: *Charlotte Temple*. Franklin died. Fitz-Greene Halleck born. [Burke: *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.]
- 1791. Mrs. Sigourney and Ticknor born. The Massachusetts Historical Society founded. [John Wesley died. Boswell: *Life of Samuel Johnson*.]
- 1794. Bryant and Edward Everett born. [Gibbon died.]
- 1795. Lindley Murray: *English Grammar*. Maria Gowan Brooks, Drake, Kennedy, and Percival born. [Carlyle and Keats born. Boswell died.]
- 1796. Barlow: *Hasty Pudding*. Dennie: *Lay Preacher*. Washington's *Farewell Address*, Prescott born. [Burns died.]

1798. Charles Brockden Brown: *Wieland*. Dunlap: *André*. [Wordsworth and Coleridge: *Lyrical Ballads*. Goethe: *Hermann und Dorothea*.]
1799. Brown: *Ormond* and *Arthur Mervyn* (part i). Alcott born. [Balzac and Heine born.]
1800. Weems: *Life of Washington*. George Bancroft born. [Cowper died. Macaulay born.]
1801. Dennie establishes *The Portfolio* in Philadelphia. *The Evening Post* founded in New York. [Cardinal Newman born. Chateaubriand: *Atala*.]
1803. Wirt: *Letters of the British Spy*. Emerson born. [Bulwer, Alexandre Dumas père, and Mérimée born.]
1804. Chief Justice John Marshall: *Life of Washington*. Alexander Hamilton died. Nathaniel Hawthorne born. [George Sand, Sue, and Ste. Beuve born. Schiller: *Wilhelm Tell*.]
1806. Hoffman, Simms, and Willis born. [Elizabeth Barrett (Browning) born.]
1807. Barlow: *Columbiad*. Irving and Paulding edit *Salmagundi*. Longfellow born. [Byron: *Hours of Idleness*.]
1809. Irving: *Knickerbocker's History, etc.* Tom Paine died. Holmes, Lincoln, and Poe born. [Gladstone, Darwin, and Tennyson born. Byron: *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.]
1810. Charles Brockden Brown died. Margaret Fuller and Theodore Parker born. [Scott: *Lady of the Lake*.]
1811. Harriet Beecher (Stowe) born. [Thackeray born.]
1812. Robert Treat Paine: *Works in Prose and Verse*. Barlow and Deanie died. [Browning and Dickens born. Byron: *Childe Harold*.]
1813. Allston: *The Sylphs of the Seasons and Other Poems*.
1814. Motley born. [Scott: *Waverley*.]
1815. Dunlap: *Life of Charles Brockden Brown*. *The North American Review* founded at Boston.
1817. Bryant's "Thanatopsis" published in *The North American Review*. Wirt: *Life and Character of Patrick Henry*. Timothy Dwight died. Thoreau born. [Keats: *Poems*. Moore: *Lalla Rookh*. Blackwood's established.]

1818. John Howard Payne: *Brutus* (acted). [Froude born. Scott: *Heart of Midlothian*.]
1819. Irving: *Sketch-Book*. Drake and Halleck: *Croaker Papers*. Lowell, Whitman, Melville, T. W. Parsons, and Holland born. [Clough, "George Eliot," Charles Kingsley, and Ruskin born. Shelley: *The Cenci*.]
1820. Cooper: *Precaution*. Drake died. [Herbert Spencer born. Leconte de Lisle born. Scott: *Ivanhoe*. Keats: *The Eve of St. Agnes*.]
1821. Bryant: *Poems*. Percival: *Poems*. Cooper: *The Spy*. Dana: *The Idle Man*. [Keats died. Flaubert born.]
1822. Irving: *Bracebridge Hall*. Neal: *Logan*. E. E. Hale, D. G. Mitchell, T. B. Read born. [Shelley died. Matthew Arnold born.]
1823. Cooper: *The Pilot* and *The Pioneers*. Boker, Parkman, and Higginson born.
1824. Irving: *Tales of a Traveller*. G. W. Curtis born. [Byron died.]
1825. Hillhouse: *Hadad*. Pinkney: *Poems*. Bayard Taylor and R. H. Stoddard born. [Huxley born.]
1826. Cooper: *The Last of the Mohicans*. [Bagehot born. Disraeli: *Vivian Grey*.]
1827. Cooper: *The Red Rover* and *The Prairie*. Dana: *Poems*. Halleck: *Alnwick Castle and other Poems*. Poe: *Tamerlane and other Poems*. *The Youth's Companion* established.
1828. Irving: *Columbus*. Hawthorne: *Fanshawe*. Noah Webster: *An American Dictionary of the English Language*. C. D. Warner born.
1829. Irving: *The Conquest of Granada*. Poe: *Al Aaraaf, etc.* [Balzac: *Les Chouans*.]
1830. Webster's Reply to Hayne. [Hazlitt died. Tennyson: *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*. Victor Hugo: *Hernani*.]
1831. Paulding: *The Dutchman's Fireside*. Poe: *Poems*.
1832. Bryant: *Poems*. Irving: *The Alhambra*. Kennedy: *Swallow Barn*. Simms: *Atalantis*. L. M. Alcott born. Freneau and Sands died. [Scott and Goethe died.]
1833. M. G. Brooks: *Zöphiël* (complete). Seba Smith: *Letters of Major Jack Downing*. *The Knickerbocker*, or

- New York Monthly Magazine* established [Robert Browning: *Pauline*. Carlyle: *Sartor Resartus*. Balzac: *Eugénie Grandet*.]
1834. Bancroft: *History of the United States* (vol. i). Simms: *Guy Rivers*. *The Southern Literary Messenger* established. Wirt died. [Coleridge and Lamb died. Balzac: *Le Père Goriot*.]
1835. Drake: *Culprit Fay* (published). Longstreet: *Georgia Scenes*. Kennedy: *Horse-Shoe Robinson*. Longfellow: *Outre-Mer*. Simms: *Yemassee and Partisan*. Willis: *Pencillings by the Way*. S. L. Clemens ("Mark Twain") born. [Browning: *Paracelsus*.]
1836. Bryant: *Poems*. Child: *Philothea*. Emerson: *Nature*. Holmes: *Poems*. [Carducci iborn. Dickens: *Pickwick Papers*.]
1837. Bird: *Nick of the Woods*. Hawthorne: *Twice-Told Tales*. Prescott: *Ferdinand and Isabella*. Whittier: *Poems*. Emerson's Address on the American Scholar. Borroughs, Edward Eggleston, and Howells born. [Swinburne born. Carlyle: *French Revolution*.]
1838. Poe: *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*.
1839. Longfellow: *Hyperion* and *Voices of the Night*. Mrs. Caroline Kirkland: *A New Home*. Bret Harte born. Dunlap died. [Walter Pater born.]
1840. Cooper: *The Pathfinder*. R. H. Dana, Jr.: *Two Years Before the Mast*. Poe: *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*.¹ *The Dial* founded. [Austin Dobson, Thomas Hardy, and Alphonse Daudet born. Browning: *Sordello*. Mérimée: *Colomba*.]
1841. Cooper: *The Deerslayer*. Emerson: *Essays* (First Series). Longfellow: *Ballads and Other Poems*. Lowell: *A Year's Life*. *Graham's Magazine* established. Hillhouse died. [*Punch* established.]
1842. Cooper: *The Two Admirals* and *Wing and Wing*. Griswold: *Poets and Poetry of America*. Channing died. John Fiske born. [Tennyson: *Poems*.]

¹ Dated 1840; really issued, as was and is often the case, at the close of the preceding year.

1843. Prescott: *Conquest of Mexico*. Allston and Key died. Henry James, jr., born. [Southey died. Browning: *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*. Mill: *System of Logic*. Ruskin: *Modern Painters* (vol. i).]
1844. Emerson: *Essays* (Second Series). Lowell: *A Legend of Brittany*. Margaret Fuller: *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. [Thackeray: *Barry Lyndon*. Verplanck began to edit Shakespeare.]
1845. Cooper: *Satanstoe* and *Chainbearer*. Judd: *Margaret*. Poe: *The Raven* and *Other Poems*.
1846. Hawthorne: *Mosses from an Old Manse*. Holmes: *Poems*. Longfellow: *The Belfry of Bruges* and *Other Poems*. Melville: *Typee*. Margaret Fuller: *Papers on Literature and Art*. Bayard Taylor: *Views Ajoot*. [Dickens: *Dombey and Son*. Grote: *History of Greece* (vol. i). George Sand: *La Mare au Diable*.]
1847. Emerson: *Poems*. Longfellow: *Evangeline*. Prescott: *Conquest of Peru*. [Tennyson: *The Princess*. Thackeray: *Vanity Fair* begun. Charlotte Brontë: *Jane Eyre*.]
1848. Gayarré: *Romance of the History of Louisiana*. Lowell: *The Biglow Papers* (First Series), *A Fable for Critics*, and *The Vision of Sir Launfal*. Poe: *Eureka*. Whipple: *Essays and Reviews*. [Macaulay: *History of England* (vols. i and ii). Dumas: *Monte Cristo*.]
1849. Alice and Phœbe Carey: *Poems*. Emerson: *Miscellanies*. Hildreth: *History of the United States* (vol. i). Irving: *Goldsmith*. Kennedy: *Memoirs of the Life of William Wirt*. Longfellow: *Kavanagh*. Parkman: *Oregon Trail*. Thoreau: *A Week on the Concord, etc.* Whittier: *The Voices of Freedom*. Poe died. [Miss Edgeworth died. Thackeray: *Pendennis* begun.]
1850. Emerson: *Representative Men*. Hawthorne: *The Scarlet Letter*. Longfellow: *The Seaside* and *The Fireside*. Melville: *White Jacket*. Mitchell: *Reveries of a Bachelor*. Susan Warner: *The Wide, Wide World*. Harper's *New Monthly Magazine* established. Margaret Fuller Ossoli died. [Balzac died. R. L. Stevenson born. Tennyson: *In Memoriam*. Mrs. Browning: *Sonnets from the Portuguese*.]

1851. Hawthorne: *House of the Seven Gables*, *Wonder Book*, and *Snow Image*. Longfellow: *The Golden Legend*. Melville: *Moby Dick*. Parkman: *Conspiracy of Pontiac*. Hudson began to edit Shakespeare. [Ruskin: *Stones of Venice* (vol. i). Spencer: *Social Statics*.]
1852. Hawthorne: *The Blithedale Romance*. Mrs. Stowe: *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. John Howard Payne died. [Moore died. Dickens: *Bleak House*. Thackeray: *Henry Esmond*. Leconte de Lisle: *Poèmes Antiques*.]
1853. G. W. Curtis: *The Potiphar Papers*. Hawthorne: *Tanglewood Tales*. Francis Lieber: *Civil Liberty and Civil Government*. Putnam's *Monthly Magazine* established. [Kingsley: *Hypatia*. Bulwer: *My Novel*.]
1854. Thomas Hart Benton: *Thirty Years' View* (vol. i). John Esten Cooke: *The Virginia Comedians*. Maria S. Cummins: *The Lamplighter*. Taylor: *Poems of the Orient*. Thoreau: *Walden*. Bird died. [Mommsen: *History of Rome* (vol. i).]
1855. Derby: *Phœnixiana*. E. A. and G. L. Duyckinck: *Cyclopedia of American Literature*. Irving: *Life of Washington* (completed 1859) and *Wolfert's Roost*. Longfellow: *Hiawatha*. Prescott: *Reign of Philip II* (begun). Whitman: *Leaves of Grass*. [Rogers died. Matthew Arnold: *Poems*. Browning: *Men and Women*. Tennyson: *Maud*.]
1856. Boker: *Plays and Poems*. Curtis: *Prue and I*. Emerson: *English Traits*. Motley: *Rise of the Dutch Republic*. Mrs. Stowe: *Dred*. Percival died. [Froude: *History of England* begun.]
1857. Child: *English and Scottish Ballads* (vol. i). F. S. Key: *Poems* (posthumous). Hayne: *Sonnets*. R. G. White began to edit his first edition of Shakespeare (concluded, 1865). *The Atlantic Monthly* established. [Buckle: *History of Civilization* (vol. i). Hughes: *Tom Brown's Schooldays*.]
1858. Holland: *Bitter-Sweet*. Holmes: *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*. Longfellow: *The Courtship of Miles Standish*. [Tennyson: *Idylls*.]
1859. Simms: *The Cassique of Kiawah*. Mrs. Stowe: *The*

- Minister's Wooing*. Irving and Prescott died. [Ma-caulay, Leigh Hunt, and DeQuincey died. Darwin: *Origin of Species*. George Eliot: *Adam Bede*. George Meredith: *Ordeal of Richard Feverel*.]
1860. Emerson: *The Conduct of Life*. Hawthorne: *The Marble Faun*. Holmes: *The Professor at the Breakfast-Table*. Motley: *United Netherlands* (vols. i and ii). James Parton: *Life of Andrew Jackson*. Stedman: *Poems*. Timrod: *Poems*. Theodore Parker and Paulding died. [Reade: *The Cloister and the Hearth*. George Eliot: *The Mill on the Floss*.]
1861. Holmes: *Elsie Venner* and *Songs in Many Keys*. Theodore Winthrop died. [Mrs. Browning and Clough died. Arnold: *On Translating Homer*.]
1862. C. F. Browne: *Artemus Ward: His Book*. P. M. Irving: *Life and Letters of Washington Irving*. W. W. Story: *Roba di Roma*. Taylor: *The Poet's Journal*. Winthrop: *John Brent*. FitzJames O'Brien and Thoreau died. [Spencer: *First Principles*.]
1863. Bryant: *Thirty Poems*. Hawthorne: *Our Old Home*. Longfellow: *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. Lincoln's Gettysburg address. [Thackeray died. George Eliot: *Romola*.]
1864. Locke: *The Nasby Papers*. Lowell: *Fireside Travels*. Thoreau: *The Maine Woods*. Hawthorne died. [Landon died. D'Annunzio born. Swinburne: *Atalanta in Calydon*. Cardinal Newman: *Apologia pro Vita sua*. Taine: *History of English Literature*.]
1865. Parkman: *Pioneers of France in the New World*. Read: *A Summer Story*, *Sheridan's Ride*, etc. Stoddard: "Abraham Lincoln." Thoreau: *Cape Cod* and *Letters*. Whitman: *Drum Taps*. *The Nation* established. Edward Everett, Hildreth, Lincoln, and Mrs. Sigourney died. [Arnold: *Essays in Criticism*.]
1866. H. H. Brownell: *War Lyrics and Other Poems*. Julia Ward Howe: *Later Lyrics*. Howells: *Venetian Life*. Emma Lazarus: *Poems and Translations*. H. W. Shaw: *Josh Billings: His Sayings*. Taylor: *The Story of Kennett*. Thoreau: *A Yankee in Canada*.

- Whittier: *Snow-Bound*. Pierpont and Sparks died. [Bryce: *The Holy Roman Empire*.]
1867. Clemens: *The Celebrated Jumping Frog*. Emerson: *May-day and Other Pieces*. Bret Harte: *Condensed Novels*. Holmes: *The Guardian Angel*. Lanier: *Tiger Lilies*. Longfellow: *Translation of Dante*. Lowell: *Biglow Papers* (Second Series). C. E. Norton: *Translation of Dante's Vita Nuova*. Parkman: *The Jesuits in North America*. Sill: *The Hermitage and Other Poems*. Whittier: *The Tent on the Beach and Other Poems*. Halleck, Timrod, and Willis died.
1868. Louisa M. Alcott: *Little Women* (vol. i). Edward Everett Hale: *The Man Without a Country*. Hawthorne: *Passages from American Note Books*. Leland: *Hans Breitmann's Party*. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps [Ward]: *Gates Ajar*. Whittier: *Among the Hills*. [Browning and Morris began to publish *The Ring and the Book* and *The Earthly Paradise*.]
1869. Aldrich: *The Story of a Bad Boy*. Clemens: *Innocents Abroad*. C. G. Halpine: *Poetical Works* (posthumous). Lowell: *Under the Willows*. Parkman: *La Salle*. Mrs. Stowe: *Oldtown Folks*. Trowbridge: *The Vagabonds and Other Poems*.
1870. Bryant: *Translation of the Iliad*. Emerson: *Society and Solitude*. Harte: *The Luck of Roaring Camp*. Hawthorne: *English Note Books*. Helen Hunt Jackson: *Verses*. Lowell: *Among My Books* (First Series) and *The Cathedral*. Taylor: *Translation of the First Part of Faust*. C. D. Warner: *My Summer in a Garden*. White: *Words and Their Uses*. Whitman: *Passage to India and Democratic Vistas*. Whittier: *Miriam and Ballads of New England*. Scribner's *Monthly* established (became in 1881 *The Century*). Kennedy and Simms died. [Dickens and Mérimée died. D. G. Rossetti: *Poems*.]
1871. Louisa M. Alcott: *Little Men*. Burroughs: *Wake-Robin*. Eggleston: *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*. H. H. Furness: *New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare* (vol. i). Harte: *Poems*. Hawthorne: *French and Italian Note Books*.

- Hay: *Pike County Ballads* and *Castilian Days*. Higginson: *Atlantic Essays*. Howells: *Their Wedding Journey*. Longfellow: *The Divine Tragedy*. Lowell: *My Study Windows*. Joaquin Miller: *Songs of the Sierras*. Ticknor died. [Darwin: *Descent of Man*.]
1872. Clemens: *Roughing It*. James T. Fields: *Yesterdays with Authors*. Holmes: *The Poet at the Breakfast-Table*. Longfellow: *Three Books of Song*. John Boyle O'Reilly: *Songs from the Southern Seas*. E. P. Roe: *Barriers Burned Away*. Warner: *Backlog Studies*. T. B. Read and H. H. Brownell died. [Daudet: *Tartarin de Tarascon*.]
1873. Aldrich: *Marjorie Daw*. Bryant: *Oration and Addresses*. Will Carleton: *Farm Ballads*. Clemens and Warner: *The Gilded Age*. Howells: *A Chance Acquaintance*. Taylor: *Lars*. Celia Thaxter: *Among the Isles of Shoals*. Timrod: *Poems*. Lew Wallace: *The Fair God*. [Bulwer and Mill died. Pater: *Studies in the Renaissance*.]
1874. H. H. Boyesen: *Gunnar*. Fiske: *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy*. Holmes: *Songs of Many Seasons*. Howells: *A Foregone Conclusion*. Motley: *John of Barneveld*. Longfellow: *Hanging of the Crane*. Parkman: *The Old Régime in Canada*. [J. R. Green: *Short History of the English People*. Thomas Hardy: *Far from the Mad-ding Crowd*.]
1875. Emerson: *Letters and Social Aims*. Gilder: *The New Day*. Harte: *Tales of the Argonauts*. Julian Hawthorne: *Garth*. Henry James, Jr.: *Roderick Hudson*. Longfellow: *The Masque of Pandora*. Stedman: *Victorian Poets*. Taylor: *Home Pastorals*.
1876. Clemens: *Tom Sawyer*. Lanier: *Poems*. Lowell: *Three Memorial Poems* and *Among My Books* (Second Series). Ticknor: *Life, Letters and Journals*. John Neal died. Johns Hopkins University opened. [George Sand died. Morris: *Sigurd*.]
1877. Mrs. Burnett: *That Lass o' Lowrie's*. Sarah Orne Jewett: *Deephaven*. Parkman: *Count Frontenac*. Stedman: *Hawthorne and Other Poems*. Motley died. [Bagehot

- died. Austin Dobson: *Proverbs in Porcelain*. Zola: *L'Assommoir*.]
1878. Emerson's Lecture on "The Fortune of the Republic." Henry James, Jr.: *Daisy Miller and French Poets and Novelists*. Longfellow: *Keramos*. Tyler: *History of American Literature During the Colonial Time*. Bryant and Bayard Taylor died.
1879. Boyesen: *Goethe and Schiller*. Cable: *Old Creole Days*. Harte: *The Twins of Table Mountain*. Howells: *The Lady of the Aroostook*. Henry James, Jr.: *An International Episode*. Stockton: *Rudder Grange*. Albion W. Tourgee: *A Fool's Errand*. R. H. Dana, Sr., died. [Edwin Arnold: *The Light of Asia*. Ibsen: *A Doll's House*.]
1880. Aldrich: *The Stillwater Tragedy*. Cable: *The Grandis-simes*. Clemens: *A Tramp Abroad*. Henry George: *Progress and Poverty*. Robert Grant: *The Confessions of a Frivolous Girl*. Joel Chandler Harris: *Uncle Remus*. Howells: *The Undiscovered Country*. Henry James, Jr.: *Washington Square*. Lanier: *Science of English Verse*. Schouler: *History of the United States* (vol. i). Stoddard: *Poems*. Lew Wallace: *Ben-Hur*. Constance Fenimore Woolson: *Rodman the Keeper*. The *Dial* (Chicago) established. George Ripley, Epes Sargent, and Jones Very died. ["George Eliot" and Flaubert died.]
1881. Hayne: *Poems* (complete). Henry James, Jr.: *The Portrait of a Lady*. Matthews: *French Dramatists of the Nineteenth Century*. Parton: *Life of Voltaire*. Holland and Lanier died. [Carlyle and Lord Beaconsfield died.]
1882. Clemens: *The Prince and the Pauper*. Crawford: *Mr. Isaacs*. Howells: *A Modern Instance*. Lounsbury: *James Fenimore Cooper*. Whitman: *Specimen Days and Collect*. Miss Woolman: *Anne*. R. H. Dana, Jr., Emerson, and Longfellow died. [Darwin, Rossetti, and Anthony Trollope died.]
1883. Clemens: *Life on the Mississippi*. Richard Malcolm Johnston: *Dukesborough Tales*. Longfellow: *Michael*

- Angelo*. McMaster: *History of the People of the United States* (vol. i). J. Whitcomb Riley: *The Old Swimmin'-Hole*. [Stevenson: *Treasure Island*.]
1884. Bunner: *Airs from Arcady*. Cable: *Dr. Sevier*. Clemens: *Huckleberry Finn*. Fiske: *The Destiny of Man*. Helen Hunt Jackson: *Ramona*. Parkman: *Montcalm and Wolfe*. Miss Murfree: *In the Tennessee Mountains*. Stockton: *The Lady or the Tiger*. C. F. Hoffman died. [Leconte de Lisle: *Poèmes Tragiques*.]
1885. Beers: *Nathaniel Parker Willis*. U. S. Grant: *Personal Memoirs* (vol. i). Julian Hawthorne: *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*. Holmes: *A Mortal Antipathy*. Howells: *The Rise of Silas Lapham*. Stedman: *Poets of America*. Woodrow Wilson: *Congressional Government*. White: *Studies in Shakespeare*. Woodberry: *Edgar Allan Poe*. President Grant, Helen Hunt Jackson, and R. G. White died. [Victor Hugo died. Zola: *Germinal*.]
1886. Mrs. Burnett: *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. Henry James: *The Bostonians*. Lowell: *Democracy and Other Addresses*. Roosevelt: *Thomas Hart Benton*. Emily Dickinson, J. E. Cooke, Hayne, and E. P. Whipple died. [Tennyson: *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*.]
1887. Crawford: *Saracinesca*. Lea: *A History of the Inquisition* (vol. i). C. F. Richardson: *A History of American Literature* (vol. i). Stedman and Hutchinson: *Library of American Literature* (completed in 1890). Edith M. Thomas: *Lyrics and Sonnets*. Mary E. Wilkins [Freeman]: *A Humble Romance*. J. G. Saxe died.
1888. Edward Bellamy: *Looking Backward*. Fiske: *The Critical Period of American History*. Henry James: *Partial Portraits*. Lowell: *Political Essays*. Irwin Russell: *Dialect Poems*. A. B. and Louisa M. Alcott died. [M. Arnold died. Kipling: *Plain Tales from the Hills*.]
1889. Henry Adams: *History of the United States (1801-1817; completed in 1891)*. A. V. G. Allen: *Jonathan Edwards*. Burroughs: *Indoor Studies*. Brownell: *French Traits*. Bronson Howard: *Shenandoah*. Howells: *A Hazard of New Fortunes*. Lodge: *George Washington*.

- Motley: *Correspondence*. Roosevelt: *The Winning of the West* (vol. i). Henry Van Dyke: *The Poetry of Tennyson*. Warner: *A Little Journey in the World*. [Robert Browning died.]
1890. Bunner: *Short Sizes* (First Series). Emily Dickinson: *Poems*. Field: *Little Book of Western Verse* and *Little Book of Profitable Tales*. Fuller: *Chevalier de Pensieri-Vani*. Gildersleeve: *Essays and Studies*. Holmes: *Over the Teacups*. Henry James: *The Tragic Muse*. Mabie: *My Study Fire*. Mahan: *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*. Nicolay and Hay: *Abraham Lincoln*. Riis: *How the Other Half Lives*. Riley: *Rhymes of Childhood*. Woodberry: *The North Shore Watch and Other Poems*. Boker died. [Cardinal Newman died. Watson: *Wordsworth's Grave*. Maupassant: *Notre Cœur*.]
1891. James Lane Allen: *Flute and Violin*. R. H. Davis: *Gallegher and Other Stories*. Fiske: *The American Revolution*. Garland: *Main-Travelled Roads*. Howells: *Criticism and Fiction*. Lounsbury: *Studies in Chaucer*. Lowell: *Latest Literary Essays*. F. Hopkinson Smith: *Colonel Carter of Cartersville*. Wendell: *Cotton Mather*. Whitman: *Good-bye, My Fancy*. George Bancroft, Lowell, Herman Melville, James Parton, and Pike died. [Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.]
1892. Conway: *Life of Thomas Paine*. Fiske: *The Discovery of America*. Parkman: *A Half-Century of Conflict*. Stedman: *Nature and Elements of Poetry*. Whittier: *At Sundown*. Cranch, G. W. Curtis, Parsons, Whittier, and Walt Whitman died. [Tennyson and Renan died. Bourget: *Cosmopolis*. Zola: *La Débâcle*. Hauptmann: *Die Weber*.]
1893. Curtis: *Orations and Addresses*. Hovey and Carman: *Songs from Vagabondia*. Howells: *The Coast of Bohemia*. T. W. Parsons: *Poems*. J. F. Rhodes: *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850* (vol. v in 1904). Parkman died. [Maupassant and Taine died. Sudermann: *Heimath (Magda)*.]
1894. Curtis: *From the Easy Chair* (three series). P. L. Ford:

- The Honorable Peter Sterling*. Gilder: *Five Books of Song*. Howells: *A Traveller from Altruria*. "Father" John B. Tabb: *Poems*. Warner: *The Golden House*. Stedman and Woodberry edit the works of Poe. Holmes and Miss Woolson died. [Froude, Pater, Stevenson, and Leconte de Lisle died.]
1895. Aldrich revised his *Poems*. Howells: *My Literary Passions*. Stedman: *A Victorian Anthology*. Boyesen and Eugene Field died. [Huxley died.]
1896. Stephen Crane: *The Red Badge of Courage*. Eggleston: *The Beginners of a Nation*. Harold Frederic: *The Damnation of Theron Ware*. Bunner and Francis J. Child died. [William Morris died.]
1897. Mahan: *Life of Nelson*. S. Weir Mitchell: *Hugh Wynne*. Tyler: *The Literary History of the American Revolution*. Justin Winsor died. [Alphonse Daudet died. Hauptmann: *Die Versunkene Glocke*.]
1898. P. F. Dunne: *Mr. Dooley in Peace and War*. Higginson: *Cheerful Yesterdays and Contemporaries*. Hovey: *The Birth of Galahad*. Henry James: *The Two Magics*. E. N. Westcott: *David Harum*. Harold Frederic and Richard Malcolm Johnston died. [Gladstone died. Hewlett: *Forest Lovers*.]
1899. Beers: *History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*. Markham: *The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems*. Ida Tarbell: *Life of Lincoln*. Woodberry: *Heart of Man*. [Stephen Phillips: *Paola and Francesca*.]
1900. Buell: *Life of Paul Jones*. Howells: *Literary Friends and Acquaintance*. W. V. Moody: *Poems*. Stedman: *An American Anthology*. Stephen Crane, Hovey, M. C. Tyler, and C. D. Warner died. [Huxley: *Life and Letters*.]
1901. W. C. Brownell: *Victorian Prose Masters*. Lounsbury: *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*. Norris: *The Octopus*. Scudder: *James Russell Lowell*. Booker T. Washington: *Up from Slavery*. Wendell: *A Literary History of America*. W. E. Channing, the younger, and John Fiske died.

1902. J. A. Harrison: *Virginia Edition of Poe's Works*. Howells: *The Kentons*. James: *The Wings of the Dove*. Woodberry: *Nathaniel Hawthorne*. Edward Eggleston, T. D. English, Ford, Godkin, Harte, Norris, Scudder, and Stockton died.
1903. Matthews: *The Development of the Drama*. R. H. Stoddard: *Recollections*. Woodberry: *Poems and America in Literature*. Leland and R. H. Stoddard died. [Morley: *Life of Gladstone*.]

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